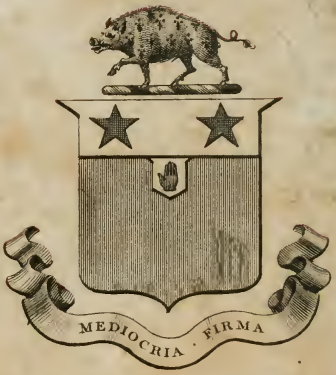
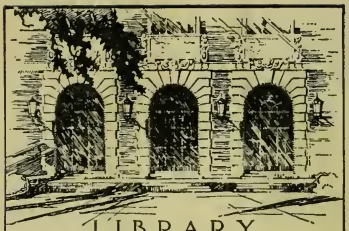


Sir Edmund Bacon Bar.t



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MATILDA;

A TALE OF THE DAY.

"Blush I not?
Can you not read my fault writ in my cheek?
Is not my crime there?"

FOURTH EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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MARSHALL

MATILDA.

CHAPTER I.

It was early in the month of July, when that most valuable department of the daily press, which is headed "Fashionable Arrangements," contained, among many other pieces of information, which, however intrinsically important, would not be so interesting to my readers, the two following paragraphs:—

"Lord Ormsby (late the Honourable Augustus Arlingford) is arrived at Mivart's Hotel, after an absence of two years on the Continent."

"Lord and Lady Eatington will this day entertain a distinguished party at their splendid mansion in Grosvenor Square."

That intelligence of this description should have attracted every eye, is not to be wondered at, when it is recollected, that, as the advance of the season had diminished the number of these events, the type in which they were announced had proportionably increased in size and importance; and many an absent fair one, who had been prematurely hurried from chalked floors to green fields, had now no other resource than to make that a distant study which was no longer a present pleasure. But be this as it may, a little before eight, on the day above mentioned, the first carriage was heard to come clattering up South Audley Street, containing Lord George Darford and Henry Penryn; two youths, most comprehensively described as "Young men about

town."—"Very unlucky, my father wanting the carriage afterwards," said Lord George.—"I do so hate to be early. The half-hour introduction to a dinner, like the preface to a book, should always be skipped."

"One might know one was too early, the fellow drives so fast," said Mr. Penryn, as they swung round the last corner, at the risk of annihilating a pensive nursery-maid, and all her "pretty ones, at one fell swoop."

"I wonder whom we shall have at the Eatingtons'?" continued he; "they have been too much in the Pidcock line this year."

"Yes," said Lord George, "and that's another bore in being early; for your human lion is not like his royal brother—the liveliest before he's fed."

Stopping at the door at this moment, the length of time that elapsed before the thundering announcement of their arrival produced

its (usually instantaneous) effect, seemed to confirm their apprehensions as to the flagrant punctuality of their arrival; and the tardy appearance of one liveried lackey alone, in red waistcoat and white apron, verified their worst fears. Many a felon has mounted the fatal ladder with less appearance of shame and contrition, than was painted in the countenances of these unhappy "young men about town," as they ascended the carpeted stairs,—about to expiate the offence of such unnatural prematurity of arrival; and the deserts of Arabia would hardly have appeared more awful in their eyes, than did the solitude of the drawing-room, where they found themselves—literally first. Silence succeeded the shutting of the door, which was at length broken by Lord George; whilst by the help of the pier glass, with his right-hand, he arranged his flattened locks; and, with his

left, quelled the first symptoms of insurrection in his neck-cloth.

"At least, we shall hear the lions all announced—we shall know who the inmates of the menagerie are to be to-day." Hardly had this consolation been suggested, when the door was opened, not by the regular officer, the groom of the chambers, who scorned to be a party to so untimely an arrival, but by a mumbling footman, who muttered something that was meant to be a name, and disappeared; having ushered in a young man, dressed in deep mourning. Our two friends regarded him with an unacknowledging stare, which the stranger repaid in kind, as he passed to a sofa at the farther extremity of the room, and unconcernedly occupied himself with a newspaper; whilst the two youths remained in the window-place, where they had nestled themselves from a sense of solitude.

In any other civilized country in the world, gentlemen thus accidentally meeting, if they did not, like the lady in the Anti-Jacobin, "vow an eternal friendship," would at least, from the circumstance of meeting in the house of a common friend, have been admitted to the local rank of acquaintances, and received the regular brevet allowances of nods, smiles, &c. But here we are more afraid of being involved in a bow than in a bad bet—of being obliged to acknowledge an acquaintance than a bill—and the most persevering dun is not so embarrassing as the face which, one is obliged to own, has acquired a legal title to a nod, from our having been incautious enough to incur acquaintanceship with the owner.

There was something in the air and manner of the stranger, which it was impossible for the most unobservant not to remark as peculiarly distinguished; and from the tact which the

usage of the world gives to every one in these matters, such would certainly have been the opinion of our two worthies, if their judgment had not been wilfully biassed by the conclusion which they logically deduced from having been every where, and knowing every body,—that "him whom they did not know they ought not to know;" and they would as soon have adopted the doctrine of the Preadamites, as have admitted, that any one, worthy to be ranked among the elect, *had* existed prior to the commencement of their fashionable millennium, just two years before. Therefore, expecting from the character of the Eatingtons that the party would be rather a mixed one, Mr. Penryn whispered to Lord George,—"I think it's the new actor: to be sure this man's figure looks better; but then I only saw him in Richard the Third, with hump, and all that sort of thing." "No," said Lord George,

"I think it's the composer—what's his name? —I caught a glimpse of his head behind the piano-forte, last week, at Lady I.'s, as I squeezed half in at the door-way. You know he asks a hundred pounds a night, and the Eatingtons are famous for paying in kind;—turtle and champagne for notes—you understand."

"I have it, George," retorted the other; "look at his black coat—depend upon it, it's the Popular Preacher. I never heard him, to be sure; but I'm quite certain it's he."

The reader will be good enough to understand, that this colloquy was uttered chiefly to evince (to each other) the witty pleasantry of the speakers; for I would not have it supposed, that they were so ignorant of that only knowledge to which they even pretended, as not shrewdly to suspect, by his appearance, that the new comer was, in point of fact, one

of themselves; though they had hitherto, by some unaccountable accident, happened not to have become personally acquainted with him.

The door was now opened, and the Dowager Duchess of Dulladone and the two Lady Townlys were announced. The former situation of Lord George and his friend was bliss, compared to that in which they now found themselves; for, besides the danger of being devoured, as they would have expressed it, by the two Lady Townlys, to which their present unprotected state seemed to expose them, their misery was increased by the shame of having been convicted, by a dowager duchess and her two unmarried daughters, of having arrived before them; and the consciousness of having thereby forfeited their best claim to that admiration hitherto so lavishly bestowed upon them from that quarter: the young ladies' idea of being "quite the thing," con-

sisting in nothing so much as pre-eminent unpunctuality.

The stranger bowed slightly to the duchess as she passed to his end of the room, which she answered with an inquiring curtsey,—her Grace's eye-sight, which was none of the best, being now rendered more treacherous by the darkness of the room. "Who is it?" said she to Lord George, in a low whisper; to which he replied, "Indeed I don't know,"—in a tone of voice *all but* impertinently audible. At this moment their host and hostess appeared from an inner room—Lady Eatington employed with a half-drawn-on glove—his lordship applying a half-opened pocket handkerchief to his nose; both which actions were meant to signify rather reproachfully, than apologetically, "You have come sooner than we expected—but here we are."

As we have introduced our readers to their

house, we shall be expected to make them acquainted with the master and mistress; but Lord and Lady Eatington were those every-day sort of people, of whose characters it is almost impossible to speak in affirmatives. Perhaps the two most positive characteristics of his lordship were, that he was a receiver of rents in the country, and a giver of dinners in town. To speak negatively, he was—no politician—no farmer—no bel esprit—no connoisseur; but the most distinguished of all these classes met at his house, to pronounce upon the merits of one of the best cooks in Europe: in consideration of which, every one, in accepting his invitations, wrote to him—

"Dear Eatington,

"Yours, truly."

And every one *enfiléd* the crowd at Almack's, to squeeze Lady Eatington's hand when she first came to town.

Her ladyship was naturally a very silly, and by education (so called), a very illiterate woman; but long habits of the world enabled her to conceal this; and if she was seldom as well informed as her guests, she was always as well dressed as her dinners—which answered all the purpose.

But how surprised were our young beaux, and our old duchess, to see, that whilst they themselves were casually recognised, the whole of the attention of both host and hostess was directed to the stranger! As the arrival of fresh company made the conversation less constrained, this was explained, though not to the satisfaction of Lord George and Mr. Penryn, by overhearing Lady Eatington telling the duchess, whose ears were almost as defective as her eyes, a long story, of which they caught—"Must recollect"—"Augustus Arlingford"—"long abroad"—"supposed

early disappointment"—" recent death of his brother"—" now Lord Ormsby"—" very rich," &c.—which immediately produced from her Grace, in rather a high tone, meant to catch his lordship's ear at some distance,—" Excuse my blindness, my lord—Letitia and Cecilia—Lord Ormsby—you must recollect Mr. Arlingford, though you were then very young—quite children."

The reflections of Lord George and Mr. Penryn, upon their half-wilful mistake, were not very consolatory, as the former fame of Augustus Arlingford occurred to them in all its pre-eminence. Lord George now recollected that, in his first conference with his tailor, he had been strongly recommended the Arlingford collar, and that a part of his dress, about which he was very particular, had been called " Arlingford's." Mr. Penryn, too, had a disagreeable reminiscence, that whilst

still at college, he lost a rouleau, when Mr. Arlingford's colt won the Derby; and both distinctly remembered, that when they first came out, if any very well-looking young man appeared, all the oracles declared that he had "a look of Arlingford;" and this was the man whom they had voted an awkward actor, a squab singer, or a methodist parson.

From this time the cannonade at the street-door became almost incessant, and every possible variety of arrival was constantly swelling the circle, which, with truly English instinct, had formed itself round the place, where (strange to say) there was *not* a fire; and many were the different ways of presenting themselves, which might be remarked:— First, The tender scion just budding in the first rays of fashion, who, after advancing desperately, and retiring awkwardly from the

circle, seemed anxiously to solicit a protecting nod from those around him, confirmative of the acquaintance he hoped he had made. Then came the well-established man of the world, who seemed carelessly to postpone the duties of recognition, till dinner and lights afforded him a more convenient opportunity of doing so. To him succeeded the "ci-devant jeune homme," whose "way of life is fall'n into the sear—the yellow leaf;" who, with out-stretched hand, and perpetual "how d'ye do," went the round of the circle, not bating "an inch of his prerogative" of acquaintanceship.

The sun, though this was the time of year when his hours are the most fashionable, had now completely removed the light of his countenance from the party assembled; when, just as Lord Eatington had expressed the necessity of waiting for Sir James and Lady

Matilda Dornton, the door was opened, and it was with great difficulty that the profoundest of her would-be admirers could distinguish, through the deepening dusk, the idol of the day—Lady Matilda Dornton.

But there was one there, from whose eye no darkness could conceal that graceful form. Years had not effaced its impression, and change had not destroyed its interest. Through all his wanderings among the fairest of every clime, Lord Ormsby had still retained, as the *beau idéal* of beauty, his early recollections of her, whom he had parted from with mutual vows of plighted faith—whom he now first met as the wife of another.

Lady Matilda had already made Sir James's excuses, as "detained at the House," and was in her turn putting some indifferent question, when the mention of Lord Ormsby's name caught her quick ear; and she knew that the

dreaded moment was arrived which, since his recent return to England, she had felt must soon come. Many of those who have already fixed upon Lady Matilda Dornton as the heroine of this history, will be surprised to learn that she did *not* faint, nor did she in any way outwardly expose herself, as a true heroine ought to have done. But *en revanche* she certainly heard not a word that Lady Eatington, in reply to her question, told her about "her poor little boy's hooping cough;" conscious as she was, that her conduct to Lord Ormsby had been in violation of her former engagement, and that her feelings were not in perfect harmony with her existing duties.

I am very much disposed, at this particular time, to enter into some little explanation with my readers, in defence of my heroine (for such in fact she is), and to extenuate in her what I cannot quite excuse. But dinner

being at this moment announced, every thing must be postponed for so important an event. All the little management which generally accompanies this announcement, was as usual put in action, but as usual the plots were rather negative than positive. Bores were avoided, — dowagers were shirked, — young ladies, if plain, were allowed to march together in double file, — but nobody was particularly sought, — etiquette preventing precedence from being usurped, even where it had been abdicated by its legitimate possessor. In despair at these symptoms, Lady Eatington (who, if she had a fault as a dinner-giver, it was that of interfering too much in these matters) exclaimed rather loudly, " Lord Ormsby, take Lady Matilda Dornton." He hesitated a moment, and there was a pause among the by-standers. He felt it was awkward to advance ; but as it was more awkward

to decline, half a minute more saw them arm in arm descending the dusky staircase. Just by such uncertain light,—at such an hour,—had they parted two years before, but in how different a scene,—and with what different feelings. It was on the eve of his departure for the Continent, that he at length tore himself from her at the gate of Delaval Park; whilst with looks that pierced the evening gloom, and gently-protracted pressure of the hands, their last words were "We part but to meet again." *Now* they had met to part for ever,—and with averted looks, linked for the moment by the forms of society—the white kid glove hardly touching the black sleeve—the constrained re-union of the moment seemed in mockery of the separation that they felt was final.

Who has not often experienced, that even when the body has sometimes been most

fettered and hampered by the restraints of society, the mind, as if in proud assumption of its independence, has made some of its wildest excursions through the boundless regions of past recollections, and fancies for the future? Certain it is that both the lady and gentleman, whom we have left in the most embarrassing of all possible situations, found their thoughts wandering, with a rapidity truly surprising, through the scenes of their early youth,—collecting, too, the most confused chaos of recollection,—many circumstances trivial at the time,—since forgotten,—but now presenting themselves in all the freshness of yesterday; no two seeming to have the slightest connection, and resembling each other only in this, that the same actors were in each. —And all this passed with an unaccountable celerity, that seemed to mock the calculations of time, whilst they were descending two

flights of stairs, with hobbling dowagers before, and giggling misses behind.—Recalling their scattered thoughts as they entered the room, and shewing the most perfect self-command in the eyes of the world, it was impossible for the most attentive observer to discover, by the blaze of light which illuminated the dinner-table, more than a slight nervous convulsion about Lady Matilda's lip, and as slight a contraction on Lord Ormsby's brow. Protracted silence would much have increased the embarrassment of their situation; but, most opportunely, Lord George Darford, who was anxious to repair the mistakes of the last half hour, had posted himself on the other side of Lady Matilda; and availing himself of his acquaintance with her, fired a random shot between her and her neighbour, which was meant to open a communication between himself and Lord Ormsby;—this had the desired

effect. If there be a moment of the day when an Englishman's reserve is vulnerable, it is when he has a soup plate before him; and Lord Ormsby gladly seized the occasion of getting rid of a little of the superfluous awkwardness of his position. An attempt at a conversational trio was the consequence; and the former lovers, who had met as strangers, now found themselves addressing each other as common acquaintances. But their situation, though not remarkable to any one, was by no means comfortable to themselves,—when a slight commotion among the servants at the door produced the announcement of Sir James Dornton and Captain Coulson.

Sir James was, in person, a man, who might be of any age that was neither young nor old; and as to general appearance, he was a man who might, if he chose it, have dropped into any vacant chair, at any table, without excit-

ing a remark one way or the other. But such was not at all *his* idea of the situation in society of a man of fifty thousand a year; and it was with horror that Lady Matilda observed him, with ostentatious punctilio, moving up the whole length of the room, with a sort of jerking strut, to make his excuses to Lady Eatington. Full well did she recollect Lord Ormsby's talent for ridicule; for next to their mutual admiration of each other, there had been no closer bond of union between them than the constant indulgence of a good-humoured species of quizzing, which the high spirits and quick fancies of both induced them reciprocally to vent on all around them.

Lady Matilda knew Lord Ormsby had never before seen Sir James; and it was with no small degree of uneasiness, that she observed his eyes open wider at the side view they caught of the Baronet as he stood by Lady

Eatington's chair—his slight rotundity of form well harmonizing with a singular obtuseness of features. But when a rigmarole unnecessary apology, beginning with—" Your Ladyship will excuse"—" Parliamentary duties," &c. ended with something about—" my better half "—she thought that she should have sunk into the ground, at the idea of Augustus having lived to hear her called *better half.*

In the mean time, the general attention was diverted by the inquiries made of Captain Coulson, who had quietly slipped into his chair, what they had done at the House?—" Oh,—we divided; we were a hundred and something—they were seventy-eight; I know it, because I helped to count them as they went out. I betted young Turford, the new member, a sovereign, that he did not count them right; he made it eighty-two. I suppose he counted the Serjeant at Arms four

times." The Captain's laugh at his own wit was rather awkwardly interrupted by an inquisitive gentleman asking what the question was?—"Oh, it was something about a place, or some economical nonsense,"—answered this faithful guardian of the public purse. The inquisitive gentleman now applied himself to Sir James, who readily undertook to explain, but soon got bewildered amongst—"Equalization of duties"—"the revenue increased by being diminished"—"spirit of innovation"—"proper source of influence of the Crown," &c.; and when the more frequent application of spoonfuls of soup had become inadequate to fill up the interstices of his ideas, and just as Lady Matilda, in a furtive glance at Lord Ormsby, perceived the dreaded curl of his lip, the Baronet was most providentially rescued by a prudent pensioner opposite, who, having retired to enjoy the fruits of an active political

life, was never anxious, wantonly, to enter on an unnecessary warfare, and therefore interposed with an opportune—" Sir James, a glass of wine;" which had the effect of turning the conversation. I am sorry to be obliged to state, that the party of which I have now detailed so much, was afterwards reckoned a failure, by most who had been invited to join it. Whether I may have mentioned any causes for this, is for the reader to judge. I may, perhaps, in some degree, have explained why those who first met Lord Ormsby there, since his return, voted him not near so pleasant a fellow as Augustus Arlingford. I am obliged also to confess, that from some unknown cause, Lord Eatington's *artiste* did not that day maintain his usual reputation; which may account for the silent sulkiness of those " dainty spirits," (yclept wits,) who are apt to make the " feast of reason and the flow

of soul" dependent upon the gratification of their grosser appetites. Certain it is, that immediately after coffee, the party separated with feelings of mental and bodily disappointment.

CHAPTER II.

"*Noja più un miglio in dietro che dieci in avanti*," is an Italian saying, the application of which is certainly as just to a retrograde movement of one's mind in a book, as of one's body in a carriage. Admitting this, I am nevertheless obliged to check a little the progress of my tale, whilst I go back for the purpose of picking up two or three stray events, which will be necessary to the carrying of my reader easily to his journey's end. I will promise, however, that if he will have a little patience with me, I will not needlessly linger by the way; and that, as much as possible, it shall be merely "*reculer pour mieux sauter*."

Lady Matilda Delaval, whom we introduced in the last chapter as the wife of Sir James Dornton, was an only child, early left, by the death of both her parents, to the absolute guardianship of her uncle, who succeeded his brother in the Earldom of Wakefield, and the splendid domains of Delaval Park.—The person to whom the care of a lovely and helpless female infant was thus unhappily confided, had passed the first half of his life in the pleasures of unbridled dissipation, and now proceeded to devote the remainder as exclusively to the toils of political ambition. He had just succeeded in ruining the best of constitutions in his early pursuits, when the change in his situation, produced by the death of his brother, enabled him to squander a princely fortune in attaining the objects of his later life; and the period when Matilda entered her eighteenth year found her guardian

with one foot in the grave, and the gouty hose, the legacy of his youth, appropriately adorned with the glittering Garter,—the reward of his declining years.

Matilda's father had passed the whole of his married life abroad. Of her mother, little was known, and nothing was ever said by her uncle. It was thought in the family, that she had been a foreigner of distinction; and this supposition seemed in some measure confirmed by the peculiar character of Matilda's beauty; for in her was presented a rare union of those distinguished traits which we are accustomed to call purely national,—a truly insular delicacy of complexion, shaded by locks of raven black; an eye of Italian fire, quenched only when the ready tear followed an appeal to the feelings of the kindest heart that ever beat in female breast. That she could be the offspring of no *mésalliance*, was marked

by her possessing, in perfection, that indescribable air, the effect of which we all feel, though we are at a loss to give it a name. We are, I am aware, accustomed to consider what the French call "*l'air noble*," as inseparable from great descent and high birth; and this opinion we involuntarily maintain, in spite of Bourbon brows, Austrian lips, and all the difficulties one encounters in attempting to recognize this mark of illustrious ancestry in the Royal representatives of the Houses of Nassau and Hapsburg, and the legitimate descendants of Charlemagne. But certain it is, that though in some, the highest born, the want of this may be peculiarly striking, it never graces those who come not of gentle blood; and as certain it is, that there never was so striking a specimen of its matchless charm as was felt by all who saw Matilda Delaval.

It was not in the every-day development of her talents, or the exercise of her feelings, that the singular disadvantages of her education were observable; for she out-stripped her instructors in the usual routine of accomplishments, and she had "a hand open as day to melting charity."

But no mother's watchful care had destroyed the latent seeds of error in her guileless heart, and proportioned in her youth the strength of her principles to the warmth of her feelings. No example of domestic happiness had told her, with the resistless power of habit, that woman's proper sphere is Home. In the succession of governesses whom Lord Wakefield had chosen for her, he was satisfied, provided they knew their *métier*, and were neither vulgar nor frightful. And when he (as he called it) retired into the country, from the time that

Matilda left the nursery, it was by every variety of needy flattery, and frivolous admiration, that she was surrounded.

At one period, indeed, better prospects seemed opening upon her. Ormsby Castle was in the immediate vicinity of Delaval Park; and Lady Ormsby, who resided here during the minority of her sons, was one of the most unaffectedly good women that ever existed. From her mild and affectionate precepts, Matilda could learn nothing but good; from the society of her daughter Emily, who was about her own age, she could derive nothing but advantage. It was here, during the occasional visits of the sons to their mother, that the acquaintance between our heroine and Augustus Arlingford, which we have taken up at a later period, commenced. That this was not the least attractive part of the intimacy to Matilda,

may be imagined; but that it was the most beneficial, may likewise be doubted.

But be this as it may, Lord Wakefield, who was never suspected of blindness to his own interest, or that of any one connected with him, marked the progress of the connexion, and did not appear to disapprove of it. To this line of conduct he was not induced merely by the possession, on the part of Augustus, of a small collateral property which had descended to him as the second son, but by the contingency which seemed probable, from the state of health of his elder brother, then Lord Ormsby, that the marriage of Augustus and Matilda would bring about a very desirable union of the contiguous property of Delaval and Ormsby: for this elder brother had, from a puny child, grown to a sickly man, as weak in mind as in body; which, added to

his extreme shyness and dislike to society, rendered his ever marrying extremely unlikely.

But there was a description of female society in which, as the shyness was not mutual, he found he got on very well; and he ended with making his own legally, a lady, the right to whom had previously been disputed among many: an act which, like other acts for the enclosure of common land, does not always answer to the new proprietor. The immediate effect, however, was a change in the disposition of Lord Wakefield towards our hero. His lordship had previously become rather averse to the connexion, from political differences. This new event very much altered the ultimate prospects of the younger brother; and not anticipating that the happy bridgegroom would, as afterwards happened, die within two

years without children, he determined that all intercourse between Matilda and her youthful lover should be at an end.

About this time the temporary embarrassments of Augustus (who had been left with that unfortunate modicum of younger brother's fortune, which is too much for a profession, and too little for independence,) materially assisted Lord Wakefield's views: for an absence on the Continent being indispensable to the arrangement of Mr. Arlingford's affairs, he left England, after taking that tender farewell of Matilda at the gate of Delaval Park, which has been before referred to.

It is necessary here to state, in explanation of what afterwards happened, that though Lord Wakefield was certainly a corrupt politician (if that term implies that self was the governing motive of his political conduct); yet had *he* been by no means successful in fea-

thering his nest, having been as prodigal and wasteful in his own affairs as in those of the nation. Twice had he been at the whole expense of unsuccessfully contesting the county, by starting Sir Simon Tooley as a candidate for that honour, having no relative of his own to put forward.

When, therefore, the bad times came, he found himself almost inextricably involved; suffering most severely at home from that agricultural distress, which he spoke, for two hours in the House of Lords, to prove did not exist.

Mortgages, bonds, annuities, and every possible species of pecuniary obligation, had been accumulated by him; and it so happened that one of the very loan-jobbers whom in his public profusion he had most tended to enrich, also reaped the fruits of his private extravagance:—one of those fund-lords, as they have

been called, who, in that revolution of property produced entirely by the anti-revolutionists, have certainly become lords of the ascendant.

When, therefore, old Smithson died, leaving all his wealth, and all his claims, to his nephew, Sir James Dornton, for whom, as one of his members, he had previously and easily procured a baronetage; it was with feelings approaching to despair, that Lord Wakefield invited Sir James down, that they might attempt to come to some settlement. Judge then of his delight, when he first perceived that the baronet viewed his niece with a favourable eye. This he soon heard confirmed from Sir James's own lips—for men of business are apt soon to come to the point in these affairs. Connexion, too, was of the utmost importance to Sir James, though beauty was not without its weight; (as where is the man with whom it

is?) Here then seemed a way out of all Lord Wakefield's difficulties ; namely, that his only creditor should marry the heiress of that part of his property which was entailed. Accordingly, with that inflexible perseverance with which he always undertook every thing in which his interests were concerned, he at once determined to leave no stone unturned, till he had effected his purpose.

The prospect was in many respects unpromising enough. Sir James was not a man to win a fair lady's heart. He had succeeded to all the purse-proud feeling of a *nouveau riche*, without the shrewd sense which would have enabled him to acquire a fortune for himself. But, as we hinted before, he was most passable, whilst quiescent; and the presence of a man of whom he stood so much in awe, made him negatively much more agreeable than he ever was afterwards. Lord

Wakefield, too, was far too judicious a promoter of his interests, to allow him ever unnecessarily to plead his own cause. But still, when his lordship himself, in his most statesman-like manner, first broke the proposal to his niece, its reception was any thing but favourable. Though he studiously avoided all allusion to her former attachment to Mr. Arlingford, the knowledge of which he had also carefully concealed from Sir James, yet it was evident that, unless some material change were effected in Lady Matilda's feelings towards that person, the failure of his scheme was inevitable. The first advance towards this change was soon brought about, though in a circuitous manner, and through no very creditable channel; whether accidentally, or at the instigation of Lord Wakefield, the reader must form his own opinion.

It was about this time that a few of the

ultra-loyal, hyper-religious, soi-disant well-disposed part of the community, conceived that they best established their claim to those self-created titles by polluting their Sunday morning's breakfast table with the most infamous publication that ever disgraced the press. Fathers of families, who would have thought their daughters' minds poisoned if they had casually at a theatre listened to a coarse expression of Shakspeare, systematically submitted to their inspection a paper teeming with the grossest allusions and the most flimsily-veiled *double entendres;* thus preparing their minds for the morning duties of that religion which prays deliverance from envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, by the previous enjoyment of the most malignant calumnies on their neighbours, and abstracting their thoughts from the things of this world only to violate, with envenomed

slander, the sanctuary of the tomb. It was in this veracious record of passing events that there appeared, in its usual style of vulgar ribaldry, the most unfounded reports of a supposed intrigue between Augustus Arlingford and a distinguished female resident in Rome, whom to see is to admire. These might have been mere random shots; for that the journal in question should wantonly attempt to defame and ridicule any one, against whom, for whatever reason, it entertained a prejudice, seemed only labouring in its vocation. But the use made of these paragraphs at Delaval Park looked as if they were not written without an object. The arrival of their favourite paper, which distance prevented from coming so appropriately on the Sabbath as in London, was always an event to most of Lord Wakefield's inmates. Weak minds, like diseased stomachs, require

unnatural excitement, and this black-begrimed and highly-peppered literary morsel was always devoured with a most unhealthy appetite. It seemed also, that the paragraphs in which Mr. Arlingford's name was mentioned, though never addressed to Lady Matilda, were always made the subjects of conversation within her hearing; and they constantly led to the recollection of former frailties on his part, for some of which there was unfortunately but too much foundation:—till at last Matilda began seriously to believe that he was a monster of inconstancy, and that he had now forgotten her, as he formerly had others. At this time Lord Wakefield enjoyed the advantage of a most useful ally, in the person of Mrs. Mechlin, a battered old female rake, but a woman gifted, beyond the generality of her sex, with the power to "make the worse appear the better reason." She was the only

one of the guests of her uncle with whom Matilda lived on any terms of intimacy: it being impossible for any one to see much of her, and resist the charms of her conversation. Her experience, knowledge of the world, and matchless tact, gave her considerable influence over her inexperienced friend; all of which were exerted to bring about the projected marriage with Sir James; which, in putting Lady Matilda at the head of a brilliant establishment, she flattered herself would also secure her a delightful *un*quiet asylum for her declining years.

It was the gradual operation of all these different causes which at last made Lady Matilda think that she was wrong in rejecting so disdainfully what appeared to all around her so very desirable. It must be recollected, that she had always been taught to consider marriage only as an establishment—a sort of snug

place for life—of which the duties were easy, and the emolument certain. It is true that she had loved Augustus Arlingford with all the ardour of youth, but also with all the heedless *inconséquence* of that giddy period. She had admired his fine manly figure, laughed at his jokes, wept when he went, and smiled radiantly at his return; but the moment of their separation had been the first at which the idea of their ultimate union had been distinctly arranged between them; and that this should now be, she felt was impossible. Is it to be wondered at, that, alternately threatened and cajoled by her natural guardian, artfully persuaded by her only friend, apparently abandoned by her former lover, and (what perhaps had more effect than all) very little persecuted with the presence of her present suitor, she at last consented to give her hand to Sir James Dornton?

If there be any among those who have trodden the weary ways of high life, who think either the situation or conduct of our heroine forced or unnatural, let them reflect a moment, and say, (granting that the combination of circumstances may be different) which of the causes that led to the event described, could not be paralleled in the life of some one of their own female acquaintances.

Hard, indeed, is the fate of many who annually throng the matrimonial market, as, at the regular return of Spring, young ladies come into season with the green peas, and go out with the strawberries. That the matronly merchants who, at this yearly fair, come to barter their fresh commodities of beauty and accomplishments, in exchange for situation and a settlement, should refuse to treat with those who can offer no other security than that doubtful bond,—love in a cottage,—does

ot seem unreasonable. But that they should measure, with such accuracy, the different sizes of property, and weight of worldly dignities, so that "if the scales do turn, but in the estimation of a hair," their judgment is influenced by it, while manners, person, and character, go for nothing in the balance, does seem rather hard upon those whose interests, after all, must be what they have at heart.

Nor is this all; for the favourable testimony of a certain set being necessary to the fashionable reputation of a new beauty, the daughters are, upon first coming out, by their mothers' own hand, inoculated with a fancy for "Detrimentals,"—perhaps to prevent their catching it naturally; and thus they become acquainted with the value of those agreeable qualities which are to have no weight with them one way or other in their decision for life. Nor are the truly unexceptionable young

men, the objects of the unwearied pursuit of these maternal managers, entirely without just ground of complaint; for such is the anxious precipitancy of the latter, that before, by dancing half a dozen times with a young lady, the former have satisfied themselves as to her merits in the varied figures of the ball-room, they are expected to have made up their minds as to her qualifications for the somewhat more complicated mazes of matrimony; and, accordingly, they are peremptorily asked whether their intentions are serious, whilst they are yet occupied in rounding off their first well-turned compliment.

It is, indeed, wonderful, that connexions so inauspiciously contracted, should so often lead to the mutual satisfaction of both parties. Perhaps it might be possible to afford a plausible solution of this difficulty; but I have already broken my anti-digressive compact

with my reader; and therefore hasten to resume the thread of my story.

The day of the marriage was, indeed, a happy one for Lord Wakefield. Sir James, in consideration of the large fortune which Matilda brought him at once, and of the residue of her uncle's property, which must come to her at his death, had cancelled all the pecuniary obligations which existed between them; and, as Lord Wakefield left the party he had assembled at the marriage feast, where, in honour of the occasion, he had broken the forced habits of temperance to which he was now reduced, a new world of ambition seemed opening to him, by the revival of his financial resources. It was but two hours after these delightful visions were dancing before his eyes, when the party below were alarmed by a violent ringing at his bell, and he was found suffering agonies with the gout in his stomach,

which increased in violence, in spite of all the skill of his physician. On the table at which he had just been sitting, was a paper, apparently in his hand-writing, which, as it might be of importance, was examined. It proved to be an unfinished letter to the Minister, which began—

"My dear Lord,

"Hearing, from very good authority, that the precarious state of poor Lord Snugborough's health renders his life very"—— uncertain, he would have added,—in all the presumptuous confidence of frail mortality;—but it was a sentence he was doomed never to finish;—the very post which was to have conveyed the expression of his reversionary hopes, informed the Minister that the Noble Earl's own honours were at his disposal, for some equally greedy expectant; and poor

Lord Snugborough continues, to this day, in the undisturbed possession of many well-earned dignities and emoluments.

To Matilda's feeling heart, the sudden loss of her only near relation, though he had never been a kind one, was nevertheless a great shock. As for Sir James, he vented his grief at his accession to thirty thousand a year, by announcing the fact to all his connexions, on paper with a black border of a most preposterous breadth.

The principal effect of this change in their situation certainly was, that the new-married couple saw considerably less of each other than they would otherwise have done. During their stay at Delaval, Lady Matilda was generally employed in little charitable details for improving the comfort of those whom she considered as now dependent on her. Sir

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James, on the other hand, was occupied with many wholesome schemes for the improvement of the property to his own advantage.

At length, the first levee of the year found them in town, where Sir James was presented to his Sovereign, with weepers on his hands, and the George and other insignia of the Orders of the late Lord Wakefield in them; and was received with that well-known graciousness, which, whenever the illustrious Individual pleases, is personal, but which is purely official when lavished on a man like Sir James Dornton—a ministerial member, with six seats at his command.

From that time forward, Sir James was regular in his Parliamentary duty, of sleeping six hours every night at the House, till wanted to vote on questions which he would not have understood if he had heard; whilst Lady

Matilda, with a face and figure which commanded universal admiration, and a manner which checked individual impertinence, shone forth, "the glass of fashion, and the mould of form—The observed of all observers."

CHAPTER III.

At the breaking up of Lord Eatington's dinner-party, Lord Ormsby was tempted by the fineness of the night, (the rarest of all temptations in England), to wander about the streets, occupied by his own reflections; when his desultory course was for a moment impeded by a brilliant equipage, which, after swinging against the curb-stone past several doors, stopped with a sudden jerk at that of a splendid mansion, just before *he* arrived at the same point. The foot pavement was immediately fully occupied by the two footmen, who proceeded with much needless bustle to the ceremony of unloading. He was involuntarily stopped therefore, whilst this was effected; and, as he stood on one side,

completely veiled in that obscurity in which the capricious economy of gas still indulges five houses out of six, he thought that, by the partial light from the open door of the hall, he recognised a female form, in the lineaments of which, he could not be mistaken. It was indeed Lady Matilda Dornton; who, having deposited Sir James at Boodle's, was returning home. He fancied that, before exposing herself to the blaze of light from within, a hand hastily raised to her face chased away a lingering tear. He had just persuaded himself that this could be but fancy, when, in reply to a question from a servant as to the carriage, a voice, every note of which vibrated on a responsive chord in his breast, answered, in a tone evidently of stifled emotion, "No more to-night." She is *not* happy then, was the suspicion which crossed is mhind as he passed on: and though he would have given

the world to have made her so, it is certain that this new view of the subject made him see, with a much less jaundiced eye, the outward advantages by which she was surrounded. As he pursued his wanderings, the idea often occurred to him, that this unhappiness might be connected with the meeting of that evening; but it was as often rejected, as the groundless suggestion of unworthy vanity, utterly unsupported by any thing in her past conduct. The result of these contradictory musings was, that when at length he found himself at his hotel, he gave orders that his travelling-carriage should be in readiness next morning, to convey him to Ormsby Castle.

When Matilda had dismissed her carriage, she ascended to her boudoir. Of all the happiest refinements of luxury, the result of so many centuries of progressive civilization, there

is nothing like a lady's boudoir. The outward ostentation of a splendid establishment, and the solid magnificence of the choicest table, are as nothing, compared to that union of attractions which here is found, all partaking of the delicacy of character of its fair proprietor; the privacy and seclusion adding to the value of all the luxuries with which it is crowded. Matilda's dressing-room was a matchless model of its kind. It is true, that the approaches to the inner recesses of this magic bower were, like fair Rosamond's of old, somewhat intricate; but the labyrinth was only formed by a redundancy of varied comforts, and the universal presence of organized confusion. Whilst the toilet-table groaned with caskets, into which the mines of Golconda seemed emptied, and shone with glittering cases, where all the perfumes of Arabia had been distilled, around were scattered the

various implements for music and drawing, and the still more various articles commonly called nic-nackeries, the fruits of the frivolous ingenuity of every country, from China to the Channel. The walls were divided between mirrors, whose merit was multiplying for a moment, a form, otherwise unique; and a few shelves of books, whose judicious selection proved, that the cultivation of the mind was here, at least, as important an object as the adornment of the person.

As Matilda entered, she seemed the guardian genius of taste in this her favourite temple. Here her return had been most impatiently expected by her attendant spirit, little Ma'mselle Felicie.

The fact is, that this was a night which had long been looked forward to, as being fixed for one of those forced exertions which the London season often makes in its old age, to

keep itself alive; and which frequently vent themselves, as on the present occasion, in a fancy ball. Matilda's costume was to be at once strikingly becoming and novel; it had been chosen by her with her usual superior taste, and had been executed by the unrivalled handicraft of her Parisian abigail. Felicie had been attentively admiring her own work, and now met her mistress, holding in her hands in triumph a pair of the prettiest shoes in the world, compared to which, Cinderella's slipper would have appeared clumsy. These, as the dress required they should be in character, had been sent for expressly from Paris, and had miraculously arrived before the ball was over and forgotten; and the national little French woman now proceeded to enlarge, with much volubility, on the peculiar punctuality of her countrymen; when she was struck, as if by a thunder-bolt, at the sudden declaration

of her mistress, that she was not going out that night. Recovering by degrees from the shock, she exclaimed, "Mais *donc*, Miladi est malade," with the protracted theatrical emphasis on the word *donc*, which is meant to express the sudden discovery of an unwelcome explanation of a circumstance otherwise perfectly unintelligible. "No, I'm quite well," said Lady Matilda; "leave me—leave me alone." Doctor Willis never left a patient with a shake of the head more expressive of his opinion as to the seat of the malady, than that given by Felicie, as, obeying the command of her mistress, she quitted the room.

"Alone! yes, I am alone—alone in the world," thought Matilda, as, seating herself at her dressing-table, she buried her taper fingers in her beautiful hair,—discomposing its studied arrangement in a reckless manner, which would have confirmed Felicie's opinion; whilst,

pressing the palms of her hands firmly against her closed eyelids, she seemed anxious to exclude all outward consolation. Her thoughts wandered mournfully on past times, and what she was, and what she might have been; and the sad conviction pressed stronger on her mind than it had ever done before, that all the budding hopes of happiness, which she had cherished in her youth, had been withered even at that altar where they ought to have ripened into maturity; and that returning thence, her light spirit depressed, and her warm heart chilled, she had found the active exercise of her affections end, where it ought to have begun. In the gay world an universal buzz of eager admiration followed her wherever she moved; but at home her talents were wasted—her accomplishments unnoticed. At home, the playful excursions of her buoyant fancy were checked, for want of a conge-

nial spirit; and the spontaneous ebullitions of her sensitive heart were smothered in the utter absence of kindred sympathy.

As, oppressed with these reflections, she again raised her head from her hands, the first object that met her casual glance, was the brilliant and varied display of her own jewel-box. "I cannot talk to *you*," she ejaculated; "I cannot confide to you my feelings,—yet it is to you, to such as you, to such cold and senseless splendor, that I am wedded." The contemptuous expression of her eye suddenly changed, as she caught a glimpse, amid all this glittering finery, of one ornament, simple almost to plainness. It was a small locket that had once been Emily Arlingford's, —it had been an early gift from her to her friend, before either had completely grown to womanhood, and when first the duties of neighbourhood had completely melted into

the pleasures of intimacy. It contained her own hair, and that of her brother Augustus. In a playful moment, and with a girlish jest, she had taken it from her own neck to encircle that of Matilda. Matilda had not lately seen it; for Felicie, who thought it by no means worthy of the good company it kept, generally concealed it under some of its more splendid neighbours. But now she seized it with eagerness, as it recalled, with the freshness of yesterday, the day when it was given. She did not raise it to her lips—a certain consciousness of feeling prevented her—but her eyes continued long riveted on it as by fascination. At last, a forced exertion of her better judgment convinced her, that nothing could be more injurious, or less correct, than the continuance of this state of morbid indulgence. She resolutely asked herself the question, why all her domestic discomforts had this night

appeared so much more trying than ever? and the answer was any thing but satisfactory to her conscience.—"No," she thought; "it is not by tender recollections of what once was, or by vain repinings at what is my lot, that I can hope to acquire strength for the performance of all the dreary duties I have undertaken. My best hope is, patient endurance—my surest safeguard, universal indifference." Then, with an effort which had now become habitual to her, she restored herself to that outward appearance of languid composure, which, except when exhilarated by the temporary excitement of a crowded room, had generally marked her demeanour since her marriage. Hardly had this salutary change been effected, when a knock at the street-door announced the return of Sir James, which was presently confirmed by his creaking shoes upon the stairs. Sir James was just the sort

of man whose shoes always creak. Liable as we all are to error, I would not judge too severely an occasional misdemeanour even of this serious description. But any *politesse*-police magistrate in England would have convicted Sir James as an incorrigible creaker.

Roused by these unwelcome sounds, and again summoning Felicie, Matilda hastened to put on the semblance of that repose, the reality of which the suppressed agitation of her feelings seemed to render extremely improbable.

CHAPTER IV.

When Matilda the next morning entered the breakfast-room, she found Sir James already seated at the table, and, by a certain important twist of his chin, evidently about to make some proposition to which he attached no small degree of consequence. When this was the case, he was apt, with a confusion of expression by no means uncommon, to invert the order of his discourse, whilst he *seriatim* propounded sundry weighty reasons for inducing him to do something at which no one could guess till the conclusion of an apparently interminable sentence. The suspense in which this kept Matilda, was in the present instance protracted by an incessant inser-

tion of breakfast, which met his words on the threshold of his lips.

" I have been thinking, that as we are not going abroad for a fortnight, and one should always be civil to country neighbours, it is the duty of great landed proprietors, and I am above thinking ill of a man for his politics, particularly now we have by *our* firmness put down the Radicals,—(this coffee is as tasteless as Hunt's,)—and the opposition is quite contemptible—(some more butter, if you please)—that we may as well ask Lord Ormsby to dinner." At this unexpected conclusion, Matilda involuntarily exclaimed, " Oh no,—by no means —it is not at all necessary." Sir James looked at her for a moment, evidently surprised at the vehemence of the objection. " It is very odd that whoever I take a fancy to, you as surely have a dislike for. I thought you seemed

very rude to him yesterday. But recollect, Lady Matilda, 'Love me, love my dog.'" There was something so ludicrous in the application of this saying, to an obligation on her part to like Lord Ormsby for Sir James's sake, that Matilda, although it was a serious subject to her, yet, with her naturally quick sense of the ridiculous, had some difficulty in suppressing a laugh, as she quietly answered that he had never seen Lord Ormsby until the night before. But he only replied, that he had taken a fancy to him—that he had just come from abroad, and therefore could tell him many things he wanted to know. "Indeed, I asked him after dinner whether he had had the springs of his carriage corded—and whether they got good claret in Italy; and I saw, by his answers, that he was a superior person."

Lady Matilda merely replied, that she did not mean to doubt that he would be perfectly competent to inform him on such points.

"Ay," said Sir James, "and my sister, Mrs. Hobson, is just come to town from Manchester. She, you know, is going to take her girls abroad for the last finish, and we may have them the same day, and he may tell us all about it together."

Matilda's dislike to the embarrassment of receiving her former lover as a guest in her own house, was not at all diminished by the prospect of having a vulgar family party to meet him. But there seemed no remedy, as Sir James proceeded to sally forth to drop a preparatory card at Lord Ormsby's; leaving Matilda to receive the Hobsons, who had arrived in town the night before, and were expected to call;—and saying, as he went out,—"You never saw my sister, Mrs. Hobson,—

you must like her,—very nice woman. Connexion, not all I could have wished;—in my mind, great difference between a warehouse and a counting-house,—but Hobson's a warm man,—Hobson's a very good name at Manchester." "Hobson a good name at Manchester!" thought Lady Matilda, "then what a pity that they ever brought it away, or did not borrow another for travelling purposes." And she prepared to receive her guests.

Miss Betty Dornton was some years older than her brother; and having brought her charms to market at a time when the prospects of her family were not so extensive as they afterwards became, (old uncle Smithson having then formed only the *nucleus* of that immense wealth, which he afterwards scraped together; and certainly having no intentions of bequeathing it in a lump to any one,) her marriage with Mr. John Hobson was not at the time

objected to. He was a steady, calculating foreman, in a large manufactory at Manchester. This situation he had gradually improved into that of a master of foremen; and his small back lodging he had changed into the largest extent of staring brick front in Manchester.

Mrs. Hobson, at the time of her marriage, was a silly, showy, bustling, chattering little body; with a brisk figure, and brisker tongue, good humoured, illiterate, and vulgar. Twenty years, and more than half as many children, had rather taken from her briskness of figure —her person seeming to have kept pace with her fortunes, in increase; but nothing had abated her activity of tongue, as Lady Matilda soon found to her cost, when the servant announced Mrs. Hobson, the Miss Hobsons, and Master Hobson; the last a hobble-de-hoyish school-boy. The three Miss Hobsons

I shall not attempt to describe individually as to character, till the reader becomes by degrees better acquainted with them. In their dress there was a sisterly sameness, consisting, as it did, of bright pea-green cassimere pelisses, superabundantly bebraided, and black beaver bonnets with pink linings. The only distinction in their appearance, was, that Miss Hobson's round rosy face was—one can't say shaded, with small bright red corkscrew curls; whilst Miss Anne, from having rather a higher bridge to her nose than was common in the family, had taken the Grecian line, and had accordingly drawn two long straight strips of sandy hair across her temples, as she thought *à la Madonna.* The third, Jemima, was at that becoming age when young ladies' hair is neither long nor short. As to the conversation of these Manchester graces,—being in consi-

derable awe of a person of whom the Morning Post said so much as it did of Lady Matilda, they confined that to occasional verbal corrections of their mother's slip-slop, which their boarding-school education fully qualified them to give. As to Mrs. Hobson, she felt no such awe as that with which the name and fame of Lady Matilda inspired her daughters. Ever since her brother's marriage, she had persuaded herself that her own consequence was so much increased by the closeness of the connexion, that she did not feel abashed, even in the presence of the cause of all that additional consequence. So she waddled straight up to Lady Matilda, in a scarlet velvet pelisse which made the sun hide his diminished head in the dog-days; and after a sisterly salutation, said, —(staring full at her,)—"Well, I'm sure Jem couldn't have done better." She then broke

at once into the subject now always uppermost in her thoughts; namely, the extraordinary circumstance of her being actually about to go abroad.

"Well," said she, "I hope that we shall all live as one family in foreign parts. To think of my going trapesing out of Old England! but my daughters must have the same *advantages* as the Miss Tomkins's, though they did make old Tomkins a knight the other day. But an't my brother a baronet? to say nothing of you, Lady Matilda. Then Dr. Snook says, that Jemima is rather *pilmonary*, and that the air of Italy will do her good; and to be sure, if it was not for fear of the *muskitties*, or banditis, or what do they call them as attacks one there, I should like Italy well enough, and to see the Pope, and the Venus of Meddi—what is it, my dear?" (appealing to one of her daugh-

ters.) "Medici, Mamma," said Miss Anne. "Ay—Medici—and the Saint Peter's—but I don't think so much of that, because we've got a Saint Peter's at Manchester. And that great cascade (Turny, or what do they call it?) that Briggs—old Briggs of our town's son—showed a fine picture of it, as he did there at our exhibition, with the water all so white, and the rocks so black, and the trees so green; very pretty it was, and little Briggs himself sitting on a three-legged stool, with it all splashing about him, poor fellow;—and then that Capital Colossus as the old Romans made."—"Coliseum, Mamma," said Miss Hobson; "and the Capitol," said Miss Anne, "is a building by itself."—"Very well, my dears, a building by itself, is it? I thought it was in Rome—but Jem ought to know, for I suppose that's what they teach him at school." This changed the current of her ideas, and

called Lady Matilda's attention to a nuisance which the presence of more active annoyances had hitherto prevented her from observing.

Of all the demands that the ties of connexion can make upon one's patience, there is nothing like the precocious introduction, into general society, of a genuine school-boy; where either, by his uneasy awkwardness, he makes all who see him equally uncomfortable; or, by his pert self-sufficiency, causes a more active disturbance.—Sir James's saying, which he so aptly applied, of "Love me, love my dog," is nothing to the trial of, Love me, love my school-boy. It is true, though, that school-boys are, after all, (to use a metaphor peculiarly suited to the Hobson family,) the raw material of which the finished articles, most sought for in a drawing-room, must be manufactured. There are, also, two varieties in the species; your private school-boy is much worse than your

public: by private schools, being meant all, however large and however open, except two or three, where the scholars are more select and gentleman-like; and which schools are therefore called public. And never was there seen a more regular specimen of the worst kind of school-boy, than that which met Matilda's eyes in the person of Jem Hobson, as he sat on the very edge of the sofa; his pale, shrunk, nankeen trowsers having worked their way up his spindle leg, which was enveloped in a wrinkled cotton stocking; the collar of his new coat, and his black stock, alone, showing any embryo symptoms of incipient dandyism; his sandy hair plaistered sideways with a wet brush, off his snubby, chubby face; and his hands occupied in studiously brushing, the wrong way, the nap of his shapeless hat.

"Put your hat down, my dear Jem," said Mrs. Hobson. "He is Sir James's godson;

we reckon him very like him," appealing to Matilda, who, though she said nothing, could not deny the imputation.

" I am sorry his uncle's out. I brought him here, as he is not going abroad with us, on purpose to see him, as it is right boys should know who they are to look to. Jem, I'm sure, will do something for his godson, little Jem, as we call him: perhaps, make him a Parliament man: it is as good a trade as any; at least, I'm sure, so uncle Smithson found it. They say, he must make six: so he may as well have one of his own kin as another. Who knows but, in time, Jem may live to be a—what was that great gentleman, who so civilly wrote to thank our people for killing the Radicals?"—" A Secretary of State, Mamma," said Miss Hobson.

" Ah! Why should not Jem live to be a Secretary of State, Lady Matilda? I can

assure you," continued the fond mother, "that all pains have been taken with his speechifying;—Jem, suppose you let your aunt hear that speech that I say makes me think I hear you in the House of Commons." Matilda submitted to this, as a minor evil to hearing the mother talk about him; and Jem, who, with all his shyness, preferred to his present state of awkward inaction, that exposure to which habit had hardened him, immediately prepared to comply; and, throwing his hand stiffly up, like a way post, began, "My name is Norval,"—in that gruffish squeak, and with that measured twang, which generally accompany such exhibitions. He was proceeding, with wonderful success: and had just arrived at the point where—

> "A band of fierce barbarians, from the hills,
> Rushed, like a torrent, down upon the vale,
> Sweeping our flocks and herds,"———

when the door opened, and in walked our two friends of the preceding evening, Lord George Darford and Mr. Penryn, who usually hunted time in couples, and meant to kill half an hour with Lady Matilda. Great, indeed, was their astonishment at the party they found assembled, and the exhibition they interrupted. Our young actor might have added—

"Our shepherds fled for safety and for succour,"

for sudden was the flight this produced in the family;—Mrs. Hobson displaying to the still wondering eyes of the intruders, as she moved towards the door, the broad back of her splendid pelisse, whose unequally-worn texture showed at once, that her velvet was English, and her habits sedentary. The young ladies followed in a cluster, stooping, shuffling, poking, and using every other means by which English young ladies of a certain class get out

of the room. Roscius, alone, "still hovered about the enemy"—till, with some difficulty, he had extricated his shapeless hat from under the feet of Lord George, who was, by this time, sprawling on the sofa; and having achieved this, with a formal bow, which he had learnt at the same time as his speech, he left the room.

"What, in the name of wonder," said Lord George, "is that young Esquimaux, whom we found exhibiting; and who are his attendant squaws?"

"That lady was the sister of Sir James; the others were her children," Lady Matilda replied, in a tone calculated to stop any further attempts at ridicule.

"Quite *manqué*, our party at Eatington's," said Mr. Penryn, thinking it right to turn the conversation. "A Quaker's meeting would have been more lively," added Lord George.

"I did not find it pleasant, certainly," Lady Matilda sincerely replied.—"Only think," said Mr. Penryn, "of their asking, together, two rival purveyors of wit; who, besides the natural *jalousie de métier*, had had a downright quarrel. Of course, as always happens, they got next each other; and were so occupied in shewing that they did not mind it, that they could think of nothing else. But there is nothing so proverbially unlucky as the lottery of a dinner-table. One is sure to get next the person one most wishes to avoid; don't you think so, Lady Matilda?"

This appeal was made at random, and without any consciousness of how conclusive a testimony she could bear to the justness of his proposition. But Lord George saved her the awkwardness of assent, by taking the allusion to himself. "I trust, Lady Matilda will not assent to a doctrine against which I

must vehemently protest," said he, with a slight bow. "Oh! you George!—Ay, I had forgotten," said his friend; "but I don't think your other neighbour, Lady Matilda, seemed properly aware of the peculiar advantage of his situation; I never was so disappointed in a man in my life as in Lord Ormsby."

"We used to reckon him a very pleasant fellow, before he went abroad," said Lord George; "I recollect, when I first came out, no party was quite the thing, without Augustus Arlingford."

The reader will probably observe, that there is a little anachronism in this statement of Lord George's; and that his recollection of their previous acquaintance had not occurred to him at the meeting of the evening before.

"But," Mr. Penryn continued, "with all his fun, he had always an infernal sentimental

turn. Just before he went abroad, we all thought that he had got some little rural attachment: some Clari, in the country."

"Perhaps, then, after all," said Lord George, "the constant swain is going to marry her; for as I was coming to you, I saw him get into his travelling carriage, at Mivart's."

This intelligence, which was communicated towards the conclusion of their visit, was highly satisfactory to Lady Matilda; not only because it relieved her from the immediate embarrassment of the intended dinner, which her acquaintance with the Hobson family had not rendered less formidable, but also on general grounds; for, however she might exert herself in public, the experience of her feelings of the preceding evening, convinced her, that the less she saw of Lord Ormsby the better.

CHAPTER V.

Thanks to Mac Adam and a rapid succession of "first and second turn out," our hero found himself, towards the evening of the morrow, at the lodge-gate leading to Ormsby Castle.

Home is said to possess an universal attraction, felt by the traveller in all his wanderings,—"Who drags at each remove a lengthening chain;"—and the return to the scenes of our youth, at whatever age, and under whatever circumstances, is supposed to impart a till then unknown pleasure. But, like the seeds of all human passions, however equally innate in the breast of all, its development is dependent on the habits of the person, and

its growth proportioned to the strength of the charm by which it exerts its influence.

The fanciful Gall may find the thieving boss, or bump, alike prominent on the cranium of the vagabond and the right honourable. On one, its impulse irresistibly leads to felony and the gallows; on the other, at most, it can only tend to suspicion at the gaming-table, or stifled disgrace as a public defaulter.

And so it is with respect to the universality of this attraction towards home. The returned seafaring apprentice, who pokes his way back to his indigenous garret in Wapping, can form but a faint idea of the proud sensations of Lord Ormsby, as he again entered the magnificent domains of his native place. On every side thousands of rival monarchs of the wood, with all the accumulated dignity of centuries, and all the freshness and gaiety of a young summer foliage, waved their

outstretched arms at the arrival of their lord and master.

Varied glades of verdant lawn conducted the eye where, from the summit of remote and apparently inaccessible crags, the wilder scions of the forest nodded their distant homage. The mountain stream roared its rude welcome from afar, which, at its nearer approach, was softened into the silent tribute of an extensive lake. The setting sun lent his oblique rays to glitter through every branch, and sparkle on the surface of the waters, greeting our hero with a natural illumination, compared with which the greatest artificial efforts of the kind, that ever victory bought, or faction extorted, were dreary and pitiful. It was thus that Lord Ormsby arrived at the mansion of his fathers, for the first time as its master.

Let the landed interest grumble as they will

at the depreciation of their property, the most successful stock-jobbing cannot give to "airy nothings, a local habitation and a name." The honest pride in the hereditary possession of an English gentleman's seat, is a feeling which no mushroom wealth can buy. An old country place is a friend whose aspect no neglect can change,—a mistress whose beauties increase with age. All other companions, absence alienates, caprice disgusts, perhaps whilst yet in youth—or, as age advances, increasing infirmities render as crabbed as ourselves, or death prematurely tears from us. But this our inanimate mother meets us on our return, the last day the same as the first; with all the freshness and kindness we left: the marks of our boyish fancy, not neglected or thrown aside, but cherished even as we imprinted them; only improved in our absence into a lovely maturity. The statesman, who

spurns all other domestic ties, yet owns this power of attachment to his hereditary place; and the greatest master of human nature who ever wrote, makes the most ambitious of men, King-killer Warwick, at the point of death, most lament—

"My parks, my walks, my manors which I had."

Happy the man who feels these enjoyments, and limits his other desires to giving, to all around who are dependent on him, cause to share in this feeling for the place of their birth. That such is the contented lot of many now living, there can be no doubt; and yet they allow some of their own body annually to slander them by the monstrous absurdity of the assertion, that the slightest alteration in the game laws would drive them from the country.

Do they mean that the continuance of an

absurd, tyrannical, and, as it has been proved, most insufficient and abortive system, for protecting their monopoly in a healthy and manly amusement, is their only object in life? Do they mean that they will abdicate all their gracious and peaceful prerogatives, as petty sovereigns, if they are not allowed also the truly Kingly Right of making war upon their neighbours?

But the fact is, that this is an idle threat. The country gentlemen will continue to reside on their estates, even though (which will never be the case,) there should not be one "coney, hare, pheasant, partridge, mallard, duck, teal, or widgeon, grouse, heathcock, or moorgame," left in the country: for they never will have the bad taste willingly to emigrate to a ricketty two-windowed lodging in a watering-place, with bad port, retailed by the dozen; one fat joint of roasted meat, that offends their nose

all the morning, before its appearance, and their palate afterwards; with a dark, dusty reading-room, for a resource, and that very unqualified semi-gentleman sort of person, whom they so much abominate, for society; in preference to the indulgence of old-fashioned hospitality amongst their neighbours, and the management of their own concerns as an occupation.

Whatever Lord Ormsby's abstract opinion was, upon this subject, it was not called into play upon the present occasion. As it was still early in the month of July, our hero had nothing but solitude to expect during his *séjour* here, as his mother had gone abroad soon after the unfortunate marriage of her eldest son; principally to avoid taking any decided step about a connexion which, as it was irremediable, her kindness tempted her to forgive; but which, she felt, her duty towards

her daughter enjoined her, as much as possible, to avoid.

He was received at the hall-door, by Mrs. Brown, the old housekeeper, a sort of heir-loom in the family; whose fondness for him had often showed itself in his childhood, by first stuffing him with sweetmeats, and then unmercifully dosing away the mischief she had done. She now met him, not quite with that warmth of manner which the affection excited by his uniform kindness would have led one to expect; but the fact was, that the joy which she felt, as a good-hearted old woman, was not a little alloyed by her professional regret, as an experienced housekeeper, that he had come a day sooner than she expected. This, however, having been explained away, and an assurance given, that any want of due preparation was all owing to his own fault, she led the way to his mother's sitting-room. This, she said, she

thought he would prefer, whilst he was alone, as it would remind him of old times. "You will find it pretty much as you left it," she said; "for when your poor brother lost himself, (God forgive him!) and they were coming here, I locked it up; for I could not bear that the like of she should be where my Lady used to sit."

This disgraceful marriage had been a terrible thorn in the side of poor Mrs. Brown, completely identified, as she conceived herself, with the family dignity; and it had added to the irritability of a temper, originally none of the best. Lord Ormsby, rather from thinking that he ought to say something, than from its being a subject which he wished to enter upon with Mrs. Brown, asked if his brother had ever lived much there.

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Brown; "they comed with all their low set, but only staid two nights; why, Heaven only knows."

This was not quite the plain and simple truth; as, besides Heaven, Mrs. Brown herself well knew why; having been indeed the cause: for one of Lady Ormsby's servants having required the attendance of Mrs. Brown in a summary way, not very soothing to her self-importance; calling out—"Your *Mistress* wants you;"—"*Mistress*, indeed!" retorted the soured purveyor of sweets;—"*my* Mistress! more people's *Mistress* than mine, if all was told." This having been immediately repeated to her Ladyship, she had assaulted the housekeeper in a manner which showed, that want of practice, since her elevation to the peerage, had not injured that easy fluency, in a dialect called slang, in which ladies of her description often acquire a most astonishing proficiency. It being impossible to restore peace, her Ladyship's unhappy husband had bribed her, (which was the only sort of in-

fluence he ever possessed over her,) to quit the castle; to which arrangement she the more readily agreed, as a country residence was not exactly what suited her best.

In their way to his mother's room, Lord Ormsby and his guide passed through a long gallery of family pictures; the first of which, by Holbein, was a female, with little grey eyes, and sandy hair, combed straight back from the forehead, and a stiff figure, amazingly squeezed, starched, and be-ruffed; and on a tessellated pavement, at her little pinched feet, was written, "Lady Matilda Delaval, first Baroness Ormsby." This had been early subject of merriment to the happy trio, which consisted of her twenty times great-grand-children and great-niece. Many were the jests at the pretended likeness between her and her merry namesake; and great the affected wonder, as to who should be the

pendant on the vacant panel at the other end of the room. The recollections which the sight of this picture painfully excited in the mind of Ormsby, seemed also to press strongly on that of Mrs. Brown, who had also, probably, speculated, in her way, upon the future occupant of the spare panel. "You will find, in my Lady's room, Mr. Augustus, (my Lord, I mean) some music and drawing-books of Lady Matilda Delaval's (Dornton's, I mean); I locked the door up, as I said, when that happened, without looking what was in the room. Perhaps you will find some way to return them to her, now she's married,—not quite as was expected, to be sure." And she stopped a moment, and gave something between a sigh and a wheeze; caused, partly by the steep staircase they had been mounting, and partly by the recollection of the disappointment of long-cherished

steward's-room gossip, when they used to toast the union of the handsomest couple in the county—Augustus Arlingford and Matilda Delaval. On the floor, at the other end of the gallery, leaning against the empty panel, was an open deal packing-case, sent by Arabella, Lady Ormsby, as she now called herself, containing her portrait, in the character of Diana, with Ormsby Castle in the back ground. Whether the resemblance in feature was as striking as the choice of character was appropriate, was not easily to be decided; for where the head should have been, only appeared the inverted form of a well-shaped leg, naked to the knee: for when, upon opening the case, Mrs. Brown had discovered who its unwelcome inmate was, she had left her just as she had found her, turned topsy-turvy, with her head on the floor, and her heels in the air. This neglect, on the part of

Mrs. Brown, of her usual habit of enforcing rigid discipline in the drill and deportment of every article of furniture, from a picture to a poker, was intentional; conveying, as she thought, an insult, appropriately disgraceful, for her intrusion amongst the immaculate inhabitants of the gallery; and in this opprobrious position she left her, to await the final judgment of her new master, which, she trusted, would be for the flames. But, on the present occasion, Mrs. Brown passed on in silence, leaving, to a future time, her appeal to his Lordship for his sentence upon it; not wishing, unnecessarily, to enter on so hateful a subject, at their first interview.

When she left Lord Ormsby in his mother's room, he acknowledged to himself, with pleasure, that it was indeed in the same state as when he last saw it. Warmly attached to his mother and sister, many combined reminis-

cences of their presence were highly interesting to him; but what he most eagerly sought for, was that collection of little things belonging to Lady Matilda, which Mrs. Brown had announced to him. One of the first that fell into his hands was a small drawing-book, which opened accidentally at a slight sketch of himself. The history of this sketch he well remembered. It was occasioned by some singularity in the shooting dress in which he had appeared, and which struck Matilda and his sister Emily as fantastical. The costume was recorded with much quaint humour, but the face was any thing but caricature; and, though sketchy, was evidently the work of one who had found pleasure—

——— "to sit and draw
His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls,
In her heart's table."

The surface of the drawing was disfigured by five or six long slender pencil marks, which, in a moment of playful waywardness she had scratched over it, when asked to show it to him for whom it was intended.

How uncertain and irregular are the approaches to the seat of all human passions. Sometimes the most trifling circumstance will casually find its way, by a short cut, direct to the heart, when a regularly connected chain of sentimental associations will in vain attempt an advance towards it. There was nothing tended more irresistibly, though against his better judgment, to revive former feelings in the mind of Lord Ormsby, than this foolish trifle which he held in his hand,—connecting, as he did, the arch glance of the single-hearted, affectionate girl who had drawn it, with the tearful eye of the care-worn woman whom he had seen two nights before; and

contrasting the warm and friendly hand, which in a playful struggle he had endeavoured to prevent from destroying her performance, with that which coldly touched his sleeve as he handed her down Lord Eatington's staircase. Poor Matilda! in a hasty moment, as she had scratched those feeble lines to efface his likeness from the paper, even so she had endeavoured to obliterate his image from her heart, and even so she had destroyed its value and rendered it unfit to be preserved. But in spite of her abortive efforts, the earlier impressions remained in all their former freshness, beneath.

The next morning, the lawyers who were to meet Lord Ormsby from town on business, not being arrived, he determined on a ride for a ride's sake; and, mounting a favourite horse, he, occupied with his own reflections, left the choice of the road a good deal to the

animal, who in the exercise of his discretion took him through the grounds, and several miles of shady lanes, to the gates of Delaval Park,—at which he made a dead point. At this Lord Ormsby expressed his first symptoms of difference of opinion; but the horse, who entertained a lively recollection of Lord Wakefield's corn-bins, had been lately unused to controul, and in his best days was a little bigoted in his own opinions as to the road to be taken—confirmed, too, in this instance, by the certainty, from all former experience, that he was indisputably right, he thought proper to resist. Lord Ormsby was in general a temperate as well as a good horseman, but upon this occasion, perhaps from irritation at being unwillingly detained on the spot where he had parted from Matilda, he corrected the animal with unnecessary severity, and then having carried his point, as capriciously

caressed him; saying " Poor Orlando! you and I must now turn our thoughts another way." Putting into execution this plan, of disciplining his own and Orlando's wayward inclinations, and wandering farther away from home, and into a part of the Delaval property with which he was not very well acquainted, he began to be rather doubtful of the road, when he saw approaching him his old acquaintance, Dick Boulby, whom he had known as Lord Wakefield's gamekeeper. Dick was passing him without notice, when Lord Ormsby stopped him, " What, Dick, don't you know me again?" After looking at him a moment, Dick exclaimed, " Why, if it beant Measter Augoostus Arlingford, why I be hanged if I warn't speering about you at that very moment. You'll excuse my not knowing you again, Sir. I'm a bit over old

to ken folks. Bad times sin' we met, my Lord you be now—"

"Yes, but the times are getting better."—"Worse wid me—they canna get better. *You* might have made them better, and that were what I was a bethinking me about, when first I seed you. You were the best lang shot I ever met in all my days; but this baronet, he dinna ken the trigger fra the cock, or may be whether shot came fra stock or muzzle."

"Well," said Lord Ormsby, anxious to turn the conversation, "he may be a very good master for all that. But I had almost lost my way: you can tell me the best road back to Ormsby; these lanes are rather crooked."—"Crooked! they be strait enuf presently. That Sir James, he be going—(think o' that, Measter Arlingford!) to make

a road through Delaval Park, strait as any line in his father's ledger !—ay, and as black too. A rail-road to carry coal, think of that. What wou'd my lady's grandfather, auld lord, as I used to follow when he rode hawking through whole range, have said when he went star-gazing, to have com'd wid his nose int' coal-cart ?

" But, I dare say it isn't so," said Lord Ormsby ; " it's a false report."

" Over true," said Dick ; " it were but yesterday I was at our best wood—that you know, where Mr. Scribbleton, my lord's secretary, peppered your legs in the Battew. Well, I seed three chaps I did not ken, with poles and other sort of machines, I guessed might be new fangled poaching tools ; so I went ti'd them, and they told I, they wair surveyors—come down fra Sir James to take elevation for line of rail-road.—They say, howsomdever, they

mun wait for Parliament, and they canna do it without my lady's word; and she, Lord bless her! is auld lord's own grand-daughter; she did a power of good last winter. I'll hear it fra her own lips before I believe—Oh, Mr. Augoostus, she might have had power as well as will to help, but for this chap,—one canna make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, as my auld woman says; but if you had"——Lord Ormsby did not wish this comparison to be pushed further, or indeed the appearance of interfering in Sir James's concerns; so, having learnt the best road from his old friend, he gave him something to remember him by, and galloped home: and there for the present we must leave him.

CHAPTER VI.

The 16th of July, the day appointed for the departure of the Dorntons for the Continent, at length arrived. The intermediate time, since we left them, had been employed by Sir James in overloading himself with cumbrous comforts of every description, mostly patent portable articles—that is to say, they were just portable enough to stuff the carriages full of things otherwise unnecessary. And being ingenious patent contrivances, they had the peculiar recommendation for travelling, that they could only be repaired by the inventor. However, by dint of a great deal of packing, they were at length all stowed; and Sir James and Lady Matilda took their places

in the travelling chaise, and Mam'selle Felicie and her band-boxes in the Britska behind.

Partial as I am to Lady Matilda, and anxious that the gentle reader should pass as much of his time as possible in her company, I still do not think it would be showing her to advantage if I were to induce him to travel bodkin between her and Sir James. I shall therefore rather propose to him, at least at starting, to take a place in the family-coach of the Hobsons, which, as stated in all the newspapers, left the Waterloo Hotel in Jermyn Street, two days previous to the last-mentioned departure.

We must, however, first introduce some of the male members of the family, who have not yet been mentioned. Mr. Hobson, himself, was usually called Old Hobson. Not that he really was older than many very personable people in the world; but his coat had a long

waist and a short collar, he abominated trowsers, always wore long gaiters, never showed his shirt collar, and his wig was the meanest of scratches. Besides this, he never laughed, and seldom spoke; and when he did, always in a short testy manner. These marks of age, more infallibly than any number of years, constitute a man old in the nineteenth century.

People wondered why old Hobson was not a pleasanter old fellow. Every thing had gone well with him in the world; but the fact was, that the situation into which his success had brought him, produced that constant contradiction between his actions and his inclinations, which caused his surliness. Conscious that he had made his own fortune, he was anxious to show the extent of his merit to the world, by spending it with spirit; and this desire was in a state of perpetual warfare with that penu-

rious turn which had helped him to acquire his wealth.

This inward struggle was most apparent in trifles, as reminding him most forcibly of the little expenses he used to grudge in his hoarding days. He would at any time rather pay a coachmaker, than a post-boy. On great occasions, too,—such as the tour abroad,—his anxiety to do the genteel thing laid him at the mercy of his family.—His dislike to the journey only vented itself in grumbling.—He never ventured to offer direct objection, much less formal opposition; but, as it was inevitable, comforted himself with doing his best to make it disagreeable.

Such was the amiable being who now took his seat in his new travelling-coach, with his wife by his side, and three daughters opposite to them. In the rumble behind, were squeezed

those two most hapless animals when abroad, a London footman and an English maid; the latter of whom, as she complained herself, "*did* for all the ladies."

The barouche-seat in front was occupied by two much more important personages; no other than our friend Jem's two elder brothers. The eldest, Tom, was what is called "in business;" that is, he spent all his time in amusing himself, whether as a pedestrian in poaching, as an equestrian in tumbling off broken-down hack hunters, or in the vehicular line, in tooling the Manchester Mail the last stage into that town.—But though he was thus always occupied out of doors, in bringing down birds, throwing down horses, or driving down passengers, he was, nevertheless, all this while "in the house;" that is, his name did duty on many a bale of goods in large letters,—"Hobson, Rising, Hobson, & Co." while his person

was following these more agreeable avocations.

It was with a view to settling Tom somewhere abroad, to increase the foreign connexions of the house, that his father consented to his accompanying them.

By his side sat a very different person,—his brother, Mr. Valentine Hobson; christened Valentine, from his having been born on the 14th of February, the anniversary of that sapient saint. And, as it turned out, he had been appropriately enough named; for much of the mawkish nonsense, and sentimental stuff of his natal day, had instilled itself into his character. He was incurably addicted to scribbling amatory trash; which worst of all offences in old Hobson's eyes, had been attempted to be corrected by procuring him chambers in Lincoln's Inn, to study the law. But the remedy, strong as it may seem, had not been

effectual; for he had never even then had a lucid interval, in which he enjoyed a temporary oblivion, that "love" rhymed to "dove;" "thine," to "pine;" "eye, to "die;" and that "heart," with a due sense of its own importance, monopolized "dart," "smart," "part," *cum multis aliis.* This seemed desperate indeed; but a fortnight at Paris having been known to effect wonderful cures in sentimental cases, he was now on his way to try that specific, and was going with his family as far as Calais. With his mother he was a great favourite, as she declared she liked a man who knew all *Bell's Letters* by heart.

This was the family arrangement, and thus they had all taken their places,—the hapless Jem winking his red eyes at the hotel door.

"Good-bye, Jem," said Miss Hobson.

"Good-bye, Jem," echoed Miss Anne.

"Remember me to Miss Jones," said one.

"And me to Miss Donking," said another.

"And all of us to Bill Buckley," said a third.

"Learn your multiplication table better, boy," growled old Hobson; and that was all the farewell the kind father took of him.

"And stick to speechifying, and you'll be a great man," sobbed Mrs. Hobson, in a tone in which present distress struggled with feelings of confident anticipation.

Poor Jem! at that moment he would have given up the prospect of all his mother's ambitious plans for him at home—even the Home Secretaryship—for the smallest place in the foreign department, that he now saw before his eyes.

At length the word was given, and the immense vehicle put in motion, not without much difficulty, and scraping, and scrambling, and after two or three abortive jerks; though the horses were four of Newman's best.

Hardly was this effected, when "Stop! stop!" cried Mrs. Hobson; "You must stop."

"Ay, stop, stop here for good," said old Hobson; "better late than never."

"No nonsense, my dear," retorted Mrs. Hobson; "but I have left behind, what I shall be dumb-founded without. Madame (what's her name's) *Voyager's Manual Exercise.*"

"Voyager exercise, you'll have enough of that in the voyage in the packet to-morrow," muttered her husband.

But this was lost on Mrs. Hobson, who had now pushed as much of her person as she could through the open window, screaming—"Jem." Jem, who thought that of course they had stopped for him, came grinning up, and was marvellously disappointed, when he was only sent back for a book. With such a

messenger, at such a time, it needed hardly be added, that the book was returned missing; and the carriage was again, with the same efforts, put in motion. But once started, there is no known weight that ever swung upon four wheels, which four English post-horses will not take at the rate of ten miles an hour, provided always that the boys have the necessary spur in the head; and these silver persuaders were, upon this occasion, unsparingly used by Tom Hobson.

By dint of this, as they reached Blackheath, they overtook a Dover Safety Coach,—called safety, originally, probably from going faster, and carrying more passengers than was previously believed possible; and certainly having since earned the title, by being oftener overturned than any other.—"Blow me," said Tom to his brother, "if that an't our *currier*." Then tapping the front window, "I

say, there's our *currier.*"— "Where's the *cooreer?*" said Mrs. Hobson.—"Let's look at the *curiare,*" said Miss Hobson, as she thought, with her best boarding-school accent. "I haven't seen the *quooria,*" added Miss Anne. "Damn the *currier,*" said old Hobson.—"That's our *curry,*" was echoed from John to Nanny on the rumble.

"What a miserable half-begotten-looking beggar he is," said Tom to his brother, from the front. "He seems a helpless sort of chap," continued John from the rear. "Quite a poor *cretur,*" rejoined Nanny; and to be sure he did not look very happy and comfortable, bumping about in the seat of the basket, his little legs dangling in the air, and his short person elbowed into nothing by two fat old women, who talked unremittingly across him to each other, reckoning the *forinneering man* for nothing. The boys

having galloped by the coach to Tom's heart's content,—they arrived at Dartford—where the expectations Tom had excited in the boys, were to be realized by old Hobson, This was rather a dilemma for Tom; for his father, when what he had given was received with a remonstrating touch of the hat, and "Please your honour, we came a merry pace," retorted, "Merry pace?—racing, you rascals; think yourself very well off I don't set old Martin after you."—"But, Sir, the young gentleman"—the boy was rejoining, when Tom, tipping him a wink, made up deficiencies amply out of his own purse; and Lunnon Bill bowing, and having said something in a satisfactory whisper to Dartford Dick, they again galloped off, before the coach, the object of all Tom's anxieties, came in sight. Without further adventure they arrived at Dover, where they spent their last

English evening in a truly national manner,—eating and drinking, without intermission, during a continued succession of dinner, tea, and supper; the intellectual part of the entertainment consisting in Tom Hobson's having the courier in, to laugh at his broken English.

The next morning, betimes, they were summoned to the Steam Packet,—where the ladies immediately descended to the cabin, "to prepare for woe;" while old Hobson was unmercifully beset by that licensed tribe of extortioners, consisting of boat-men, ladder-men, custom-house runners, ostlers, porters, and a long *et cetera*.—"Ah! I knew, if I left England, I should pay for it," he said; "but this is beginning rather soon;" all the time fumbling the loose change in his breeches-pocket, the complete disappearance of which he would have thought utter ruin, though now going where it would be perfectly useless—

he sneaked off in time, into some undiscovered hole, from which he was not extracted till they arrived at Calais.

And now, that deafening clamour, and bewildering bustle, with which sailors give to their ordinary duties the same importance as if the vessel were going to the bottom, were silenced; the all-powerful voice of the Captain summoned, from the cauldron beneath, a spirit, who rose half through the hatchway, like a devil in a pantomime through a trap. The word was given; and the steam-boat began tickling old Neptune's sides with its claws. Part of the boards that covered one of the wheels being open, Tom Hobson took his post there; and being, as we have already seen, a great amateur of rapidity in rotatory motion, was highly pleased with its exertions, and kept crying—"Bravo! go it, my tulip! spin along, my fine fellow! bravo!" till the

whirl of the wheel communicated itself to his head; and the sea acting equally upon both, he was soon incapacitated for further observations.

Against the other paddle, in a pensive attitude, leant his brother Valentine, who having, amongst his other studies, read an English translation of Corinne, thought it necessary, like Lord Neville, to take a pathetic farewell of the white cliffs of Albion; which tender feeling, as he was only going for a fortnight to Paris, his mother country, however partial a parent, could hardly be supposed to reciprocate with any one of her numerous family. However, there he stood, leaning his fat face on his pudsy hand, and trying in vain for a rhyme to cliff,—"whiff" and "stiff" being both unmanageable. At last his head was turned before his couplet,—and his patriotic sickness yielded to one of a

less sentimental description—his *mal-du-pays* being succeeded by the *mal-de*-mer.

Such was the disabled condition of the Hobson family, when their passage was concluded, (as is always the case,) in less time than it was ever done before, though in half an hour longer than they were told was expected, at starting. They now entered Calais harbour, and prepared to expose themselves to the gaze of the crowd assembled to criticise the last importations from the island of beauty.

Nationality is a sort of generous illiberality, a dignified selfishness, the indulgence of which, so far from exciting self-reproach, one easily persuades one-self is praise-worthy, as well as pleasing. The consciousness of monopolizing, within our sea-girt isle, a proud pre-eminence of beauty, is one of its most gratifying illusions.

Yet, I own, that in returning along the Dover road, I have been sometimes a little puzzled in my attempts to be struck with this, as, in passing, I have endeavoured to persuade myself, that a slouching gait, high round shoulders, thick waist, and thicker ancles, must belong to a lovely face; and leaning forward to convince myself, the slight glimpse has not quite realized the expectations national vanity had formed.

If such disappointment has sometimes been my fate, in spite of all my prejudices, of which I am proud, what must a Frenchman, whose prejudices are certainly the other way, think (when he thinks at all) of the boasted beauties whom he daily sees scrambling and shuffling to their inn, with all the disadvantage of just recovering from that most unbecoming of maladies, of which a packet is the cause?—their complexion (which is always their first attrac-

tion,) completely discoloured; their dress, (which is never their forte,) splashed and draggled; displaying, in short, all the disfigurement, and none of the interest, of recent distress. Though Venus did first come from the sea, assuredly she never landed from a packet.

We have, however, sent more favourable specimens than the present representatives of an English Venus, and her three attendant graces; who, in the persons of Mrs. and the Misses Hobson, with old Hobson, like Vulcan, hobbling after, excited no small merriment, as they made the best of their way to Dessein's Hotel.

CHAPTER VII.

The feeling which one experiences in the first change from an English to a French inn, must be like that of a horse who is suddenly taken out of a warm, close stable, and turned into a loose box. In the first, he is often cramped for room; kept much too hot; plagued with superfluous care and attention; never left enough to himself; and stuffed beyond what he can eat. In the other, he has a fine, roomy, airy place, to walk about in, and nobody ever seems to trouble his head about him, or to come near him, except at random, to feed him, when they have nothing else to do.

At any rate, if the comparison be not quite just, it is one which struck Tom Hobson, as

he and his family were turned into a large, staring, out-of-the-way kind of room, and left to their fate. Minutes, that seemed hours, passed, and there was no appearance of any one taking the least notice of them. Mrs. Hobson, on whom the discipline of the packet had entailed a most ravenous appetite, now became most clamorous. All in vain;—at last she heard a footstep on the stairs, and sallied forth. There she caught a stray waiter, singing—"*Partant pour la Syrie.*" He was proceeding on his way, without attending to her, when hunger made her bold; and though she had lost her "*Manuel de Voyager*," she screamed at him, as she thought, in the words of that useful publication,—"*Je suis* femme, *il faut me manger.*" The *garçon* stared a moment, in astonishment; when the truism contained in the first part of the sentence, not seeming to reconcile

him to the obligation implied in the remainder —he passed on—" *Partant pour la Syrie.*" Their case thus seemed quite desperate; when first an authoritative voice was heard upon the stairs, abusing every body to the right and left; of which the most audible words were,—" *Sacré! de faire attendre; Sacré! Milord Hobson;—une des plus riches familles d'Angleterre; — Sacré!*"—and to their astonishment, there appeared the figure of the much-despised courier, *sacreing* into the room the identical *garçon.* Leon's altered appearance, in " Rule a Wife and have a Wife," did not create greater surprise, nor, indeed, a more complete change in manner and deportment; nor was it easy to recognise the little, helpless, much-enduring being, in the shabby surtout and oil-skin hat, in the arbitrary, bullying, swaggering hero, glittering in gold lace and scarlet, with shining

yellow leather breeches, and clattering about in a commanding pair of boots. It was like the Emperor Napoleon, rising from a sous-lieutenant of artillery, upon the extinction of the *ancien régime*, into absolute power.

Thus, after the short-lived anarchy of the steam-boat, Pierre had completely superseded all the former legitimate authorities of the Hobson family. From that time forward, nothing could be done without him; all Mrs. Hobson's almost unintelligible wants were obliged to receive his sanction, before they could be satisfied;—old Hobson's *eau-de-vie* and water could not be obtained without his approbation;—Tom was obliged to resign, into his more efficient command, all future controul over the postillions;—even the young ladies could not lay their heads on a downy pillow, unless it was procured by him; and when Miss Hobson desired that

she might have *deux gros matelots* on her bed, he it was that saved her from the danger to which an unconscious substitution of one vowel for another, might have otherwise subjected her. The dinner was not only obtained at once by the exertion of his authority, but upon the whole gave astonishing satisfaction. True it is, that old Hobson began by d——g the soup, as mere salt-water, with sea-weed floating in it; by which he succeeded, as usual, in making what, from recent recollections, was to all the party precisely the most unwelcome of similies. Some *Maintenon cotelettes*, too, excited much admiration; Mrs. Hobson wondering why they were wrapped up in paper; and Tom, supposing that they were meant for them to carry in their pockets, instead of sandwiches.

Dinner being finished, and the rain continuing, the party were again reduced to their

internal resources for amusement; and as the detail of these is not likely to afford much gratification to my readers, I shall leave them, for the present, to pursue their journey, turning my attention to more important personages.

CHAPTER VIII.

Sir James and Lady Matilda Dornton were left just about to start on a continental tour, and just about to become, for the first time since their marriage, entirely dependent on each other for society.

La Bruyere says, "*Le commencement et le declin de l'amour se font sentir également par l'embarras où l'on est de se trouver seuls.*" This is particularly applicable to those whose connexions are dependent, for their continuance, entirely on the will and pleasure of the heart, whose only link is love. But those whom worldly views have united "for better and worse," and who have made the state of the affections an after-thought, are apt to find, in the embarrassment of a continual *tête-à-tête*,

no slight hints of the above kind, but a very disagreeable conviction impressed upon them; namely, the confirmed negative of love, or the impossibility of loving.

This unpleasant discovery is, in well-regulated families, almost indefinitely postponed. Besides the perpetual bustle of the London season, which is always effectual; even in a country-house, the dreaded dependence on each other may, for some time, be palliated either by an idle sporting brother or two, an unmarried sister, who hangs a little on hand, a led captain, a fed chaplain, or a nameless dependent of some kind or other. But travelling is a desperate case; a daily *tête-à-tête*, side by side in a close carriage, is a powerful dispeller of all doubts or illusions on the subject of likes and dislikes. How many early friendships which have withstood the caprice and rivalry of school or college, has a tour

through Europe dissolved! The perpetual change of every thing else, varying climates, postillions with the different-coloured jackets of every state, new towns daily rising in the distance, arrived at, seen, and left behind again;—all this gives a preternatural sameness to the eternal presence of one's post-chaise companion, which makes one feel at length, as Sinbad did towards the old man of the sea.

How much worse was the situation of our heroine, whose travelling experience only confirmed her former fears, as to the state of her feelings towards him, from whom the end of the journey was to bring no separation!

Lady Matilda had been gifted with extraordinary quickness of feeling, but with an almost imperturbable sweetness of temper united with it. The first was sensibly wounded, at finding with how perfectly unintellectual a companion she was paired;—the latter was

not a little tried with perpetual ebullitions of vulgar selfishness, which, somehow unaccountably, the atmosphere of a carriage, in travelling, seems singularly calculated to bring out and display.

The day they landed in France, they had attempted to reach St. Omer, and were not a little annoyed, upon arriving there, at finding the gates were shut. This is, no doubt, a highly praiseworthy precaution in the legitimate authorities of a great empire; but, to the uninitiated, it does seem a little doubtful, whether, in a time of profound peace, a Limonière, or even a Berline en Poste, could overturn the government, or even take the town, though they should not arrive at the gates till a little after eight in the evening. Remonstrance and entreaty were, however, alike in vain, and Sir James and Lady Matilda were reduced to the necessity of passing

the night in a wretched cabaret in the suburbs, where, but for the darkness, they would have seen it boasted on a board, that extended over the whole front, "*Ici on loge à pied et à cheval.*"

Here Matilda, jaded and dispirited, found herself in a long narrow strip of a room, whose two sides were equally divided between windows, against whose ill-closed casements the rain never ceased to patter, and doors which obstinately refused to shut, though most severely slammed at each entrance of the sabot-footed attendants. She threw herself into a little stiff-backed chair, and leaning on a ricketty table, her eye fixed upon two newly-laid logs of green wood, which showed more affinity to water than fire, by simpering and weeping, instead of crackling and blazing; the only symptom of ignition being smoke, which in a body deserted the chimney for the room.

Her attention was called for a moment to Sir James, who stood there, his usually vacant countenance only marked by that owlet look, which a sleepy traveller exhibits on first facing the light; and his discordant voice not softened to comfort her, but raised to abuse the negligence of the servants, who, by mislaying his segars, had prevented him from adding that delight to her situation. With such a companion, in such a scene, Matilda felt that though the luxuries and comforts of life do not, in themselves, constitute happiness, their utter absence to those who are accustomed to both, can very much aggravate misery.

If in those marriages, of which there are so many, where mutual attachment is to be the effect, and not the cause of the connexion, men did but feel the necessity of bestowing, at least as much care in concealing for a time, faults of manner and of temper, as their vanity will still

induce them to take, in hiding, if possible, defects of person; if they were not so very hasty in stripping their character of those borrowed ornaments and artificial advantages which it wore as that of a lover,—they would not then lose the opportunity, never to be recovered, of fixing affections, which, if not theirs already, must at that time be powerfully predisposed in their favour; for whilst the feelings newly kindled at the altar are yet warm, and the inclinations malleable, an impression that lasts for life is easily stamped; but a repulsive chill then given to the heart, it remains cold and insensible ever after.

I do not mean to state, that any temporary management could have rendered happy the union of two persons so perfectly unsuited to each other as Sir James and Lady Matilda. Vulgarity was so strongly marked in his manners, and selfishness so thoroughly in-

grained in his character, that constant intercourse with him would have been scarcely endurable by any one with much less than Matilda's refined delicacy of taste, and even more than her natural sweetness of temper.

Yet was Sir James what is called in the world "A good sort of man." No very high praise either, as it is a name which, in its very essence, implies the utter absence of the agreeable;—a character alike remote from the possession of those minor talents which constitute the charm of every-day society, or the endowment of those higher qualities which excite extraordinary admiration. A good sort of man is a man in easy circumstances, who has therefore never been convicted of dishonesty; of phlegmatic temper,—who has therefore never been guilty of any violent outrage;—of mean abilities,—who has therefore never either in private wittily satirised

his neighbour, or in public disturbed his country by his political ambition. A strange misnomer, a good sort of man. He may be a good man; he certainly never has proved himself a bad one; but as to being a good sort, specimen, or sample of a man, heaven defend us from a world peopled after such a pattern!

For six long days, through detestable roads, did Matilda swing side by side with Sir James, who, when he had nodded himself out of an uneasy nap, was generally occupied either in fidgetting for his snuff-box, or grumbling at the profusion of packages with which he had himself loaded the carriage. Their road the while lay through three hundred miles of unparalleled ugliness, even in that most uninteresting country, self-styled "*La belle France.*"

"*La belle France*" has no more pretensions to beauty, than the majority of her daughters. Like many of them, she has not a single good feature in her face; but unlike them, she does not even do her best by adventitious aid to deserve the title she arrogantly assumes. The slovenly mother of a smart family, she shows herself boldly in all her unadorned ugliness; her whole form wrapt in one shapeless, unvaried yellow gown every summer, which is changed for her old brown suit all the winter. England, on the other hand, though her daughters are proverbially dowdy, is a very coquettish elderly gentlewoman. Not a defect but is carefully concealed; not the smallest beauty, but is made the most of —decked out in every variety of colouring, —verdure of the softest velvet, shaped in fashion's newest fancy, and flounced and fur-

belowed with woods and plantations, trimmed in the best taste of Mesdames Flora, Pomona, and Co.

For six long days, as Matilda journeyed on through endless avenues and boundless plains, " If," thought she, " my way through life is to be like this, unvaried and uninteresting; and, like this, straitened by such irksome marks of limitation, may the objects around hold out no stronger allurements than the sameness of the present prospect, to tempt a departure from the strict line of duty."

Their route latterly had been rolling up and down in a smooth shapeless undulation, which, like a ground-swell at sea, though tame in itself, often betokens the neighbourhood of bolder breaks in the surface. In fact, the ridges had gradually become sharper and steeper; and the majestic Alps in the distance had already begun to peep above their cloudy

screen, at the pigmy intruders who were arriving at their outer gates.

The scenery about Moray, a little village at the foot of the Jura, is picturesque, if not grand, and forms at least an appropriate outwork at this approach to Nature's stupendous pile.

As the Dorntons descended the last pitch down to that village, which was to be their resting place for the night, Matilda beheld, for the first time in her life, real mountains; as we can hardly dignify with that title any of those round punchy protuberances which we have in England. She was enthusiastic in her admiration, whilst Sir James only remarked that it was "devilish steep and dangerous."

As it was yet early to stop, though too late to cross the Jura that night, she was anticipating with the first sensation of pleasure she had experienced for some days, a solitary

ramble with her pencil, leaving Sir James to superintend the preparations for dinner, and amuse himself with his segars—when, as they drove up to the inn door, half a dozen voices which Matilda too well recollected, though habit had not yet rendered them familiar to her, exclaimed at once, "Law! it's my uncle and aunt,—How d'ye do, uncle? How d'ye do, Lady Matilda? How d'ye do, brother Jem?" "Only think, our dickey-spring broke, and Tom has cut his face; and the stupid blacksmith has made it much worse than it was before (that's the dickey); and Betsy has sprained her ancle; and Pa says that though it did look so thick, (that is the iron spring,) it was all good for nothing within."

This clear explanation of their calamity accounted for their being still detained here, but did not reconcile to Matilda the necessity which it entailed of her abandoning her solitary

ramble. Sir James, she knew, was the more jealous of any inattention, on her part, towards his family, as he was himself rather more ashamed of them than he would ever allow her to be of any thing of or belonging to him. It was also a tender subject with him, because once, when Matilda's intimate friend, Mrs. Mechlin, had been criticising the dowdy appearance of the Hobsons, and wondering why they went abroad, our heroine had, in a thoughtless moment, said, that, judging from their dress and address, she should think they were *bag*-women travelling with samples of Manchester fashions and manners.

It is probable, that if she had thought one moment before she spoke, her fancy would have suggested something better:—it is certain, that if she had paused at all, she would have been altogether silent on so delicate a subject. However, her friend had repeated it

heedlessly to Sir James, as an excellent thing, and it had given prodigious offence. Sir James's own manner towards the Hobsons varied much, as it was alternately governed by a desire to impress them with respect for him, or other people with respect for them.

Of all sorts of pride, purse pride, or the pride of purse (if one must not *coin* a word, even for one's purse), has the most influence upon every-day deportment. The object of all pride is, to make those around feel their inferiority; to effect which, the purse proud man is, more than any other, reduced to *viva voce* assertions in society. Pride of family may silently vent itself in its sixteen quarterings on the panel of a carriage; or, it may lie quietly on one's table, in a Debrett's Peerage, with a back like a young tumbler's, broken just enough to show with ease what is required of it. Or, if it is rather the pride of recent

rank than antiquity of descent, it is amply gratified by the direction on the back of a letter, or a brass plate on a front door.

But the pride of purse is of a much more restless, obtrusive disposition; it cannot satisfy itself with the possession of the outward advantages of wealth, for those are shared by the constant succession of needy spendthrifts, who, each in the course of his ephemeral existence, make as much outward show. It is only, therefore, by an ostentatious and over-bearing manner in society, that the purse-proud man can succeed in his object of making himself disagreeable wherever he goes.

There is, however, another distinguishing trait in this description of pride, that, amongst its professors there is much more subordination than in any other. A man who is proud of his family, will find some very sufficient reason why he is quite as good as another, who, ne-

vertherless, numbers several more quarterings; but the wealthy man's pride depends so entirely upon calculation,—is so completely a matter of figures,—that the man of ten thousand a-year, however bullying to the man of two, would no more dispute about giving way to the man of fifty thousand, than he would think of denying the balance between the two sums, if he saw them upon paper.

This it was that made old Hobson have to sigh a respect for Sir James. He was proud of his own exertions in having realized a good lump of money in a common way; but he looked upon Sir James's enormous fortune with admiration; as a monstrous fungus, which old Smithson had raised to a preternatural size, in the hot-bed of corruption. Strong as this feeling was, it seldom softened his manner so far as to show what Sir James thought the proper degree of respect; but, upon the pre-

sent occasion, as the Dorntons entered, old Hobson forgot Sir James altogether. He had never seen Matilda before, and so true it is, that transcendent beauty will sometimes make an impression upon, apparently, the most impenetrable stuff, that, for a moment, his crabbed countenance relaxed into something approaching towards admiration, of which a parallel instance was never recollected, even by Mrs. Hobson, in her best days; and, rising from his chair, he involuntarily muttered—"superfine!"

It was soon arranged between the gentlemen, that as the inn boasted but one saloon, they should all dine together in it. This being settled, Lady Matilda retired to her own room, merely to escape for a moment from the family party, but under pretence of preparing for dinner. This excuse being taken literally by the Misses Hobson, they determined to do

likewise; and summoning the unhappy Nancy, they all three put her services in requisition to make them smart for Aunt Matilda.

Miss Hobson having, upon further inspection of the damage done, been found not near so much disabled as the carriage, acted as *fuglewoman* for the other sisters to dress by; so that, by the time Lady Matilda returned to the saloon, by one door, still in the same pretty Parisian redingote, her bonnet only exchanged for the most becoming, because the most unpretending of caps, the three sisters entered at the other, all in low gowns, with satin petticoats, short-sleeves, pink sashes, and white shoes.

Closely following his sisters, came our friend Tom, his face not improved by sundry black patches, the consequence of his fall; but his neck, about which he seemed much more occupied, shining in the unsullied purity of his

best starched cloth. Once before had he seen Lady Matilda, when he called to pay his respects in London: but his introduction was not an auspicious one; for her Ladyship's groom of the chambers, who was a man of discrimination, having introduced him as—"The young man from Hamlet's, my Lady;"—she saluted him with—"Haven't you brought your little bill with you?"—To which he replied—"Little Jem, you mean, my Lady; my brother Jem."

When they were seated, Mrs. Hobson began:—"Well, I'm sure it's all very pleasant travelling, to see people who can talk French so fast; and then the roads all paved and strait, like streets without houses; whilst there they're making all Lunnon like a turnpike road, with buildings. I'm sure, Mr. Grumbleton told Hobson, he didn't know his counting-house in Bishopsgate from his country-house

at Hackney, now they were both equally muddy and dusty.—I'm sure you must like foreign parts, Lady Matilda."

"I am not," replied Matilda, "particularly fond of roads which follow the crow in his flight; nor has the chaise-window shown me much to admire in passing through France; but I have been very much pleased with all I have seen to-day—without compliment," she added, smiling, and rather amused at the unintentional flattery which her speech might be supposed to convey. "Well, I admire all I have seen of foreign parts," retorted Mrs. Hobson."—"Yes," grumbled old Hobson, "and the more you admire them, the more they laugh at you; you'd better have staid at home; it's all very well for my Lady there, who can show herself against any thing they can show her."

All the Hobson family were in mute asto-

nishment at the phenomenon of any thing so like a civil speech coming out of the mouth of its head; though, perhaps, after all, it was only said to give additional bitterness to his attack upon his wife. She, however, seemed quite invulnerable, as she continued,—"Well, never trouble your head about all that, but send me some more soup, my dear."—"Here, addressing the *fille* who was waiting,—"What is the girl staring at?—*Ici*,—what d'ye call her?—*Garçon, prenez mon* plat."—The charge of staring was certainly well founded against *la fille*, for she could not take her eyes off the profuse display of white necks and red elbows, on the part of the Miss Hobsons, of which she had never before seen the like; and, with that nice observation of manners and appearance with which French women of every rank are always endued, she was puzzled beyond measure to account for the three "*horreurs*" being

seated at the same table with a person like Lady Matilda, whom one glance told her to be "*mise à merveille.* That the mere accident of travelling at the same time should have produced this union among English people, all her former experience told her was very unlikely, as she had often known, when two solitary Englishmen had arrived separately, that the last comer would wait, starving for want of his supper, in his bed-room, till the other had left the saloon, rather than sit down in the room with a man he did not know.

The *soubrette's* speculations, were, however, interrupted, by Sir James sending her to his courier for his English comforts, in a canteen as big as the trunk in which Iachimo hides himself. Cocoa paste, essence of coffee, &c. were not very serviceable at dinner, but some Harvey's sauce was hailed with great glee; though, as there was no fish, there

arose some difficulty whether to apply it to *fricandeau*, *fricassé*, *pâté mêlée*, or *poulet rôti*.

The sight of all these English comforts, however, gave a new turn to Mrs. Hobson's feelings about the comparative merits of the two countries. Her opinions were always as lightly formed as they were loosely expressed; and, so that she was but allowed to talk, she could be, alternately, equally voluble on both sides of any question.

"Well, after all, there is nothing like Old England—where things are good, if they're dear; and there is great cheating in all their cheapness here.—What d'ye think? t'other night, when we were at that town (what's its name?) where they all fought for ten years about one naughty lady (more shame for them!)"—"Do you mean *Troyes?*" said Lady Matilda, smiling: "Yes, *Troy*—ay—

when we were at Troy, I *saw* how cheap Champaigne was—so, thinks I, one may have Port for next to nothing—so I sent for some to make some bishop for my good man there—who is as fond of it as mother's milk—ay, for all you look so, you are;—well, would you believe it? they charged more than ever I payed for Claret at the Bridgewater Arms, when I wanted a bottle or two on some great occasion; now you see there was no reason in that at all. To be sure, such things as they call wine here! they gave us a bottle the other night, they told us was wine, though their own name for it was Saint Cider, I believe."—"Saint Péray, mamma," said Miss Hobson: "Ah—well—perry or cider, it's all one, and not so good as Herefordshire—neither."

As Mrs. Hobson was one of those persons who talk for talking sake, and precisely *because* they have nothing to say,—and as there

is no reason whatever, in the nature of that kind of talk, why it should ever end spontaneously,—perhaps I had better put a forced stop to it at once, if it be only for the purpose of impressing my readers with a due sense of my moderation, in letting them off so easily, when I evidently have them at my mercy. Sparing them, therefore, for the present, any further *échantillons* of "Hobson's choice," I will only add, that our heroine retired early to her room, more than ever convinced, that no bodily exertions can be half so overpowering as those social efforts which labour to support the forced intercourse of uncongenial companions.

CHAPTER IX.

The next morning, Pierre announced that all the skill of the marischal had only succeeded in rendering the dickey perfectly unserviceable, and that it was now impossible that it could be mended short of Geneva. In this dilemma, the Dorntons could do no less than offer to take Miss Hobson with them, and let Tom share the Britska with Ma'mselle Felicie. This arrangement, which gave general satisfaction to all the Hobson party, was proposed, by Lady Matilda, with that unaffected facility with which she always promoted any thing really good-natured, without considering its effect upon her own immediate comforts.

Tom was delighted at first with his new companion, having been already long enough abroad to think that there was a certain "*Je ne sais quoi*" about the appearance of Ma'mselle Felicie, which was a very good equivalent for beauty. Unfortunately, however, for him, the favourable impression was not mutual. Tom was very much disfigured in his optics by his accident, and Felicie was not as much taken with his black eyes as he was with hers. Then, too, though she had been occasionally obliged to muffle her tongue in English whilst in that country, she had been very glad to get rid of the incumbrance; and upon starting for the Continent, she had determined to lay it all by till her return, with her own lumber, and her lady's old gowns. So that, at present, Tom's eyes and tongue being as unable as her's were unwilling to communicate, their intercourse was not likely to be very interest-

ing. Besides all which, poor Tom completed his disgrace with his new companion, by unwarily stepping into one of her favourite bandboxes, just as they were about to start; on which she muttered something about "*gaucherie;*" which, without understanding it, his guilty foot told him was not flattering, and he became affronted in his turn; and from that moment their *tête-à-tête* was as perfectly matrimonial as Sir James's and Lady Matilda's had been before the intervention of Miss Betty Hobson.

The ascent of the Jura, never a very exhilarating business, seemed most particularly tedious to all the different detachments of the party who were now crawling up it. But after leaving the highest post-house, upon a sudden turn of the road, there burst upon the bewildered gaze a prospect unparalleled in its rare union of the sublime and beautiful.

Far above rose, in the lonely pride of utter desolation, the wildest regions of eternal snow, whose pointed peaks seemed to pierce the firmament itself. Down in the depths below, as the morning vapours dispersed, were caught partial glimpses of the glassy lake, over whose unruffled surface many a light sail skimmed, in the full confidence of summer security; whilst the varied banks were enriched with all that could render delightful the scattered dwellings which imparted universal animation to the scene.

Matilda clasped her hands in an ecstasy of silent admiration. Even if she could have commanded ears which would have understood her feelings, words would have been wanting to express them.

Miss Hobson only exclaimed,—"Law! what a way one can see, to be sure."

Sir James, having with some difficulty edged

himself to the front of the seat, deliberately put down the side window, poked out his head, and turning his back at once upon the ladies and the landscape, gave his undivided attention to the arrangement of the drag-chain.

Pierre had remained with the Hobson coach, to perform the same service; and seeing his master peeping out of the window, he called his attention to what he was accustomed to consider one of the lions of the route, "See one grand view, *Serr;* there are des montagnes très-affreux—de mountains ver much frightened; and là-bas, un pays très-riant—a contrie which is ver laughable."

"Laughable," said old Hobson; "I'll tell you what—I shall think it no joke if I'm pitched to the bottom. So mind what you're at."

Even this, vociferated in no gentle tone,

did not disturb his three female companions from the gentle slumber into which they had been rocked by the lengthened ascent.

If the reader will condescend to peep for a moment into the Britska, which had been delayed at the last post for horses, there he will find Tom so delighted, at the rapid pace with which, the carriage being light, the postillion tried to catch his comrades in the descent, that he never once took his eyes off the bumping back before him.

Mam'selle Felicie, on her part, having caught a distant glimpse of the town of Geneva, without paying the least attention to her companion, began, perhaps a little prematurely, arranging her hair, settling her bonnet, and making sundry other little coquettish preparations for her anticipated arrival.

Nothing worthy of remark occurred to the travellers till they came within half a mile of

Geneva, when Miss Hobson suddenly exclaimed, "What a funny carriage, with two ladies, who look like English; and yet they don't! The postboys will run over them."

Matilda observed a *char-à-banc*, containing an elderly and a young lady, who, however great their general skill in coachmanship might be, had now their united attention occupied in a letter they were reading, and seemed, therefore, in some danger of the catastrophe hinted at by Miss Hobson; and as the postillions pulled up to avoid this, our heroine caught a glance of the strangers, just as their embarrassment was removed, and recognised, in the younger lady, the happy, cheerful face of her early friend, Emily Arlingford, which now beamed with more than its usual animation, as, almost immediately after the carriages had separated, she perceived Lady Matilda.

"Dear Emily," thought Matilda; "she is still the same, the same even in her affections for me." And losing herself in reflections on the past, blended with anticipations of future pleasure in her society, and finishing with a determination, in which pride had some share, that to her, at least, she would make the best of her present situation, she was hardly conscious when they stopped at the hotel, that they had entered the town of Geneva.

CHAPTER X.

THE state of Geneva has often puzzled me. I have not understood why this pigmy republic was allowed an apotheosis, when the mighty spirits of Genoa, and of Venice, were laid for ever by the Holy men of Vienna. I was so dull as not to comprehend, at first, that it was a practical joke, on the part of those wicked wags, the confederated despots, that—like Fielding's burlesque upon heroics in "Tom Thumb,"—Geneva was intentionally left to bring liberal institutions into disrepute, by holding itself up as an example of the consequential insignificance and petty policy of a free state.

I give the royal jokers credit for their trick, though I have at length found it out. It is

no doubt indispensable that a republic, to command respect, should be large enough to be independent—that its interests should be of so dignified and extended a nature, as to induce its active servants to sink petty personal considerations in their partnership in the common stock of glory and of power. To ensure a chance of this, it is necessary that the stake should be of a certain value;—for no one was ever heard to devote himself enthusiastically to the duties of a vestry meeting. The boundaries of the state, too, should be felt as a defence, not as a restraint. The sea, as being most closed against attacks from without, and open to enterprise from within, has most appropriately marked the limits of some of the mightiest modern republics—as Genoa, Venice, and Holland.

To one who has ever bestowed a thought upon these things, there certainly is something

irresistibly comic in the spectacle of a pocket republic, squeezed down in the very centre of overgrown empires, situated in a little watch-making, tea drinking town, on an inland lake, with a few sail of pleasure-boats.

The poking one's nose against a microscope all the morning, and scratching away at a barely perceptible piece of mechanism, is, no doubt, not the best way to acquire enlarged views of political institutions; and gossiping every evening with half a dozen old women, over as many cups of tea, is not the most perfect school for popular declamation. There is much in all this at which the muscles of the most rigid republican might involuntarily relax, though it is at the same time a topic of triumph to every Ultra in Europe, as they chuckle over it with undissembled contempt.

But the best joke does not always bear

examination. How much of all this ridicule applies to the form of government itself; how much is caused merely by the petty limits within which it is confined? Would a tiny tyranny be more sublime if a real legitimate king were established as the main-spring in this watch-making town, ruling despotically over every hand, whether in the service of the minutes or the hours? There is not a Tory in England who has not quoted the famous answer of a gallant English aristocrat, who having, when a young man, been summoned before the Syndic for some offence, and desired to quit their territory in four-and-twenty hours, replied, "*Magnifiques Seigneurs, il ne me faut que trois minutes.*"

It does not seem to me that much of the point of this would have been lost, if it had been made to a Prince of Pimlico, or a

King of Petty France or of Little Britain, if there had been such persons, instead of a Syndic of Geneva.

But however this may be, there the conceited little republic is—set up by the Holy Alliance to be laughed at; and it does its best, certainly, to render itself a government at once unnecessarily meddling and frivolously offensive.—Not that I have any objection to the despots laughing at their own hoax, provided they do not carry the joke too far; which, however, I cannot but think they have done, when they call upon those whom they have at least nominally constituted free, to refuse an asylum to those who have been unsuccessfully struggling for real liberty. This, however, is too serious a branch of the subject to be lightly touched;—so let us join in the laugh at the Genevese,—comforting ourselves with the reflection, that we are not

obliged to take from the patent automaton-makers at Vienna their discredited specimen of a rival manufacture. We need not look alone where their fingers point; nor will the inquiring spirit of the age, in its search after those institutions best calculated to promote human happiness, be confined even to any quarter of the globe. If on the one side of Europe we see, in the creeping paralysis and prematute decrepitude of Asia, the certain effects of a long course of despotism, on the other we behold, as a political prodigy, the Herculean infancy of the free States in America. Civilization rose with the sun in the East, and as surely will it set in the West.

CHAPTER XI.

THEIR first breakfast in Geneva had not long been despatched, and Sir James had only just left Matilda alone, whilst he went to settle some *lionizing* for the day with his sister, who was in the same hotel, when an eager voice was heard in the anti-room,—"Never mind, I'm sure she'll see me"—and in one moment more, Emily Arlingford rushed into the arms of her early friend. Lady Ormsby following, "I must have my turn too, though I cannot run so fast;—my legs are grown old and stiff—but my arms are not," said she, as she threw them round our heroine's neck.

Lady Ormsby had more than the mere remains of beauty. Indeed, time had marked her much more lightly than many a gay

grandmother, who still enters the lists as a rival to her daughters' daughters, and plays off her veteran batteries against a third generation of lovers. But there are many things in which the world is ready to take us at our own valuation.

Lady Ormsby had evidently long abandoned all pretensions to beauty. Her dress, though never neglected, was never conspicuous. She would as soon have thought of flying as of flirting; and, therefore, she was only considered as a good-humoured, well-bred, cheerful chaperon. In truth, she had long ceased to wish to shine otherwise than with a borrowed light, or to excite any other admiration than that reflected back on her by the praises of her children. The greatest source of affliction to her, next to the death of her husband, had been the disgraceful life of her eldest son; but she regarded the present Lord Ormsby

with a mingled pride and fondness which almost amounted to adoration. He, however, was an eccentric planet, that only occasionally crossed her path, to dazzle and delight. Her daughter Emily was the polar star, on which all her worldly hopes were fixed.

Never was a daughter more worthy to engross a mother's heart—never was that purest of earthly unions more perfect, cemented as it was by respect without restraint, and affection without blindness.

When a ready flow of pretty nothings had given vent to the first ebullitions of pleasure, felt by long-divided friends at meeting again, Lady Ormsby said, "You must promise to come to us at our little villa on Thursday. I have not the pleasure of knowing Sir James; but I cannot allow myself to feel as a stranger to any one connected with you. Besides, we Anglo-continentals do not stand upon the same

form as you have been accustomed to in London, where intimacy consists in writing little lying notes of excuse, beginning, 'Dear Lady so and so,' to every one of five hundred friends. We do not see people here through the same undistinguishing medium. Society abroad is like a telescope; it allows one to pick and choose one's objects, and bring those one likes as close as actual connexion could do."

"Yes," said Emily, "and one has here no tiresome duties of acquaintanceship; one may present the small end of the glass when one pleases, and so make distant acquaintances still more distant, till those on the verge of the social horizon need no longer be distinguished."

Matilda, to whom this image of the glass had presented the pleasing, though fallacious, idea of excluding from the sight all those whose position was too close to be the subject of its influence, added, "And even with the

large end one's sight is confined to what one wishes to see."

"Then I'll have mine fixedly facing you, till I quite stare you out of countenance. I certainly had no glass at all yesterday," said Emily, "when I did my best to make you run over me; but we were just returning from the post-office, and how could I be attending to any thing else, when I was reading a letter from my"——She suddenly checked the animated tone in which she was speaking, and added, more quietly,—"from England." Her eye at the same time wandered unconsciously from her friend, and fixed itself upon a hat of Sir James's, which, well brushed, and with gloves dangling from the brim, was evidently domesticated on a small table opposite.

Matilda's eyes followed those of her friend, and this unwelcome memento of authorised intrusion, contrasting with former circum-

stances, seemed to give a temporary check to both their spirits; but Emily continued,—"I dare say you think me grown a terrible amazon, to manage a horse by myself, and drive mamma without masculine help."

"How should I think so," replied Matilda; "when you recollect the independent way in which I used to ride over from Delaval to Ormsby?" She suppressed a sigh, as she recollected whose presence occasionally gave her confidence, and for whose offered accompaniment her casual fears had formed the best excuse.

Lady Ormsby, by way of turning the subject said,—"I do not think that you will find many people you know here. The annual flight of birds of passage from the north has not yet taken place; but your arrival tends more to mark the approach of the season, than ever one swallow did to make a summer. There

are, by-the-bye, two new comers, whom you will meet at our house on Tuesday, Colonel Canteen and Mr. Tynte. You must have seen the Colonel; he is principally famous as living to eat, instead of eating to live: a very formidable character in my small establishment; nor, indeed, should I have ventured to ask him, if there had been any other *pied-à-terre* for him at present in the town. *Au reste*, he is every where, and knows every body; is a good creature, and, come when he may, nobody minds him."

"And, go when he will, nobody misses him, I suppose," said Lady Matilda; "for that generally follows from such a negative character."

"His travelling companion, the Rev. Mr. Tynte, is much more of a character," said Emily. "You must have heard of him, as the great connoisseur and amateur painter,

With him art is not second nature, but nature second art. The finest view would be to him uninteresting, unless it would make a good composition. I question whether he could not see, even you, without admiration, unless fortunately you reminded him of some famous Guido, or well-known Titian."

"One must at best, then," said Matilda, "expect to be rivalled in his good graces by the rich colouring of one's own gown."

"You will meet only one other person," continued Emily; "a great friend of ours; Count Santelmo, an unfortunate Italian refugee. You must get *his* character from mamma: you recollect of old her partiality for a *liberal*."

"We saw much of him," said Lady Ormsby, "at a time when family circumstances prevented our going out; and I trust, that our society has contributed to soften the melan-

choly loneliness of his situation. He is, in my opinion, a man who, had his destiny been cast as a native of England, or the member of any free state, would have filled Europe with his fame. But his wayward fate is united with that of luckless Italy; and here he is, a wandering exile, dependent, at present, upon the precarious protection of this little republic. After the manner in which Emily referred to me, you may think me perhaps partial, both personally and politically; but mine is not the age when praise is hyperbolical."

Matilda had not formed any such conclusion from what had past; on the contrary, there is a sort of freemasonry amongst women, which enables them to detect one another's feelings, by signs imperceptible to us; and there was something in Emily's countenance, whilst Lady Ormsby was praising Count Santelmo, which made Matilda suspect that, at least in this

instance, she had inherited her mother's partiality for a *liberal*. And this opinion was rather confirmed as Emily proceeded. "It's very odd, Matilda, and shows how likenesses may exist, independently of similarity of situation, local association, or family connexion;—but there is something in Count Santelmo, which puts me irresistibly in mind of you. There, now! that smile is so like him!—And, then, when he has been reading Alfieri aloud to us, there is something in the tone of his voice that has often brought back the recollection of you, and your favourite, Shakspeare. To be sure, you never used to break out quite so loud as he does sometimes."

Matilda's comment upon this was interrupted by the return of Sir James, who was introduced, in due form, to Lady Ormsby and Miss Arlingford; and Matilda saw, with some dread, that he was preparing a speech, of

which he was, in due time, delivered, consisting of an assurance of the pleasure Lady Matilda and himself had derived from Lord Ormsby's society in London.

Lady Ormsby and Emily both looked a little surprised at his declaration; and as Matilda felt that it must be conceived to imply rather more than the exchange of a few casual words, at an accidental meeting one day at dinner, she blushed a little, in spite of herself, as she added, in a hurried manner, though with an even tone—" that they had *once* met Lord Ormsby at dinner at Lord Eatington's."

It was a trying moment for Matilda, when thus obliged, for the first time, to mention him with indifference, in the presence of those connexions who knew so well on how different a footing they had once been. But such is the magic of a name, that the title of " Lord Ormsby" passed easily as that of a stranger

from her lips, when Augustus, or even Mr. Arlingford, might have "stuck in her throat."

The subject was now immediately turned; and the conversation, under the influence of Sir James's presence, became common-place. They discovered, among other things, that "the Rhone was blue;" "the summer had been wet;" that "Geneva jewellery was cheap, but not good;" and having discussed these knotty points, they separated, after Matilda's promise had been confirmed by Sir James, that they would dine at Lady Ormsby's villa, on the Thursday morning.

CHAPTER XII.

On the day appointed for Lady Ormsby's dinner, the party, as proposed, assembled at the villa. Matilda was very much struck with the manner and appearance of the young Count Santelmo, though the presence of so many strangers, and the embarrassment of communicating in a foreign language, prevented him from taking much part in the general conversation.

Colonel Canteen, as will be expected from Lady Ormsby's account of him, did not waste his undivided attention on the intellectual part of the entertainment. But if he looked to the table for his *pièce de résistance*, he furnished between whiles little *entremets* of gossip, with which he was always particularly

well supplied. He handed round several newly-reported marriages for general discussion; informed Sir James, from the best authority, that there was at present no chance of a dissolution of Parliament; and told Lady Ormsby that her son was returned to town from Ormsby Castle,—of which indeed she was before aware.

Matilda the while was much amused with her neighbour, Mr. Tynte, whose eccentricities were those of a well-cultivated mind. She attacked him playfully for his preference of Art to Nature, and he defended his mania with much good humour, and with an enthusiasm half real, half assumed, which was highly entertaining.

"I am not obliged," he said, "to confine my admiration within the every-day limits of vulgar vision—to acknowledge that sunshine is bright, or green fields look fresh. A

painter's eye can derive interest from the wrinkled features of an old burgomaster, or add dignity to a group of boosing boors. There is no utensil, however servile its purpose, which in our hands may not, through the charm of colouring, become the means of administering to the refined pleasures of taste. Now," added he, holding up a decanter of Bordeaux, " I should desire no better food for the palette than this."

The Colonel, who from the other side of the table had caught part of this about taste, and, as he thought, *palate*, and who was himself agreeably surprised at widow's wine being so good, interrupted him—" Good food for the palate—indeed, I think so—how highly coloured it is!"

" That is what I was admiring," said Tynte; " with some of these other bottles, what a good composition it would make."

" What ! " in horror, interrupted the Colonel. " Composition ! why its great merit is, that it is genuine."

" My dear Colonel," retorted the other, " you have not now to learn that our *tastes* are different."

" No, indeed," said the Colonel, seeing his mistake ; " I prefer a plain piece of varnished mahogany to the best painted panel, and the maiden purity of a white cloth to the meretricious beauties of the highest coloured canvas."

" But," said Tynte, again addressing Matilda, " in this transitory life we ought to attach proper importance to the permanence of our pleasures. It would not be gallant to hint that the most perfect beauty will decay ; but you will admit, that the most glorious sunset in nature soon ends in darkness ; whilst *my* Claudes shine by lamp-light, and glow even in winter. There is too high

authority for my taste, in a country where the sovereign has a gallery, instead of a seraglio, of beauties."

" I am convinced," said Matilda, " that to you the animation of Hermione's statue would have been a cruel disappointment, and

> ' Would you not deem it breathed,
> And that those lips did verily bear blood ?'

would have been uttered in despair."

The Colonel, who became a little impatient at this lengthened discussion of a subject not quite in his beat, and anxious to bring back the conversation within the more usual limits of dinner-table gossip, said to Lady Ormsby, " I think our friend Augustus was supposed at one time to have blended this taste for fine arts and fine women, and to have been warmed, from his admiration of the cold marble, into a most fervent passion for the

beautiful original. We thought, at one time, that La Venere Vincitrice had so far vanquished him, that he had forgotten England and all in it."

This was a subject which Lady Ormsby could never bear to hear mentioned with common patience, though she knew it all to be an invention; she therefore replied with more warmth than was usual to her, "There never was the least foundation for that report. It was the most groundless piece of scandal that ever malice invented, or folly propagated. Poor Augustus! I knew, from his letters at that time, that he had forgotten nothing in England. It would have been better for him if he had."

As she uttered these last words, in a tone of strong feeling, her eyes involuntarily met Matilda's, and both mutually read, in the unconscious expression of that momentary

glance, much that each would have wished to have concealed. Lady Ormsby was annoyed at having been betrayed into any thing that sounded the least like a reproach on her young friend—which, if it had been ever so well deserved, her good taste told her ought never to have been hinted at by her. She did not, however, know then how to mend the matter; and the dinner having been concluded, she made the signal for leaving the table.

But what a new light seemed suddenly to break upon Matilda! Augustus Arlingford—the universally-admired, all-conquering Augustus Arlingford, constant throughout to her, and suffering severely from her unaccountable fickleness, was an image which had never before occurred to her as within the extremest verge of possibility; and yet all this seemed implied in Lady Ormsby's words,

and still more confirmed by the confused and distressed expression of her countenance as their eyes met.

Her first sensations at the discovery, (which were all that a few minutes' stroll on the lawn gave leisure for,) were of a mingled nature, and there was much certainly that was soothing to her feelings; but yet she felt, that it was now more than ever incumbent on her, studiously to avoid his society.

Matilda's mind was occupied, during the drive homewards, with a pleasing retrospect of the social party they had just left.—Her's were not feelings of gratified vanity, for there had been no room for display,—but of satisfied self-esteem, arising from the calm consciousness, latterly rather unusual to her, that this was an intercourse with minds and manners congenial to her own. Perhaps I must own there was one little ingredient mixed up with

her recollection of the party, which gave zest to the pleasure she had experienced, namely, the conviction which she had extracted from Lady Ormsby's words and looks, that Augustus had never viewed her with indifference. In vain did she attempt to argue herself out of the pleasure she involuntarily derived from those words. "Ought I on any account to be rejoiced at such a discovery?" thought she; "my lot in life, if not quite of my own choice, is one for which I alone am responsible. If, too late, I feel impatient at the bondage into which I have sold myself; is it any consolation to know, that, but for my own act, all might now have been after my heart's first wish? If, in spite of myself, I sometimes give vent to fruitless repinings, ought I not to regret the knowledge that they are shared by one deserving a better fate?"

She endeavoured to persuade herself, that this reasoning of her calmer judgment had chastened her feelings on the subject, and she turned towards her companion Sir James, and tried, by redoubling her usual efforts to conciliate and please, to induce him to think favourably of the coterie they had left.

But this was no easy task. Sir James was not at all disposed to be pleased with any of the party. The fact was, that he always felt most at home in any society where merit was estimated rather by length of purse than by length of head.

Now, none of those they had that day met were worshippers of golden idols. Mr. Tynte was much too high-flown to think of any thing so matter-of-fact as pounds, shillings, and pence;—to be sure, if a valuable collection of pictures had come to the hammer, he might

then have envied Sir James his almost unlimited power of exchanging written paper for painted canvas; but as it was, he contented himself with pitying him as a Goth, without a particle of taste.

Colonel Canteen felt a respect only for that part of annual income which went in weekly expenditure, and would have valued a man rather upon his butcher's and baker's than upon his banker's book.

Sir James had, indeed, made two or three attempts to show himself off to his two hostesses, by leading the conversation to subjects of vulgar ostentation; but these endeavours had caused much suppressed amusement to Emily, the effect of which Matilda had once detected; and, though mortified, she could not but own to herself, so just was the ridicule, that, under other circumstances, she would herself have joined in the merriment.

One of the great characteristics of society abroad is its freedom from the overwhelming influence of wealth. In that erratic English community, which, like the gipsy tribe, is governed in all its wanderings by rules and regulations of its own, mixing as little as possible with the natives of the soil, the supreme authority is often a matter of contest. It is generally, perhaps, vested in an aristocracy, in the best sense of the word; but from nothing is it so perfectly free as from the dominion of a plutocracy. A mere man of wealth descends from his strong hold, when, leaving behind him "all appliances and means to boot," he puts himself on a level with the economical traveller.

This Sir James began to feel, and was therefore already dissatisfied with Genevese society; and he gladly availed himself of an opportunity, which offered the next day, of being

absent for a short time, on an excursion to Chamouni, an expedition, however, which he did not consider as at all suitable for Matilda to join in.

CHAPTER XIII.

The morning on which Sir James left Geneva for Chamouni, was the most brilliant the summer had yet produced. Sunshine at Geneva, like a smile upon the face of a famous frowning beauty, is doubly prized, both for its rarity, and the magnificence of the charms which it illuminates, and to the perfect enjoyment of which it alone is usually wanting.

The fineness of the day had persuaded Lady Ormsby and Emily to accompany Count Santelmo on the Lake immediately after breakfast. It was not yet mid-day when an English travelling carriage, that seemed "stained with the variation of each soil," marking that its inmate had not lingered by the way, turned out of the main road down

the lane which led to the campagne on the lake; and after a handsome head in a travelling cap had several times been thrust through the window, as if making inquiries, the postillions finally stopped at the gate of Lady Ormsby's villa. The traveller jumped out, and was at the inner door before he was met by old Wilson, the house steward, who, after giving him a lengthened stare, exclaimed, "My Lord! well, to be sure—to think of your coming upon us all like a little impromptu, as I may say!" for, in his residence abroad, Wilson too had acquired a little foreign garnish for his tongue. Then altering his tone, he added, "But nothing's happened amiss, I hope?"

"No, nothing at all, Wilson," said Lord Ormsby, "only that I got away sooner than I expected,—that's all. But where's my mother?"

"Why, her Ladyship is just stepped out

for a little promenade, I believe; but if you will wait in here, I will fetch her myself." To this Lord Ormsby consented, as he did not wish to have the family meeting under the restraint of a public walk—which was what he perhaps understood by Wilson's "promenade." He was left therefore to himself in the sitting-room, which opened into the conservatory.

"What a happy life!" thought he, as he first admired the room itself, and then the thousand little comforts with which its present mistress had adorned it. "Never idle, either of them, I'm sure," he continued, as his eye wandered among various symptoms of elegant occupation, and at last rested on the instrument,—on the desk of which he was somewhat startled at recognizing, in a well-known handwriting, "Matilda Delaval," marked on the first leaf of his favourite "*Ombra adorata.*"

Full well he recollected the night at Ormsby

Castle when she had thus marked that paper, and which had at the time drawn from him a remark upon her thinking it necessary thus to appropriate that which she had every way identified with herself. "Could she then be thus near to him? Was it possible that on the very spot where he was then standing, she had been lately delighting his own family with those tones to which he had never listened without rapture?—No: he persuaded himself that these were all vain illusions, the offspring of a heated imagination; and that a much more natural explanation was, that, like those little relics he had found at Ormsby, the music had formerly been left there, and that his sister had now been practising it."

He had nearly convinced himself that this must be the case, when he accidentally took up from another table a sketch book, with a pencil, whose touch he well knew, left

between the leaves, at a half-finished view from the very windows of the apartment where he was seated. There could be no mistake here. "Her pencil was always left in the book." This was apparently so trifling a circumstance, that none but a lover's recollection could have retained it as characteristic; but the view spoke for itself; and, as he took it to the window, and devoured it with his eyes, "she is then actually at Geneva," exclaimed he.

That he was not more surprised at the discovery, was what he could not account for. He had never owned to himself that the possibility of such a chance had had the least effect in determining him upon this foreign expedition; whilst it was so very natural he should be desirous to see his mother and sister, that *that* reason alone was quite satisfactory to one never rigid in self-examination

of the motives of every action to which he felt inclined.

Whilst still gazing on the sketch which he held in his hand, he was roused by a gentle tap at the farther window, by which the garden entrance passed which led through the conservatory into the room;—and turning round, he caught the last glimpse of a female form entering at the glass-door. Almost at the same moment a well-known voice exclaimed, whilst passing the conservatory, "My dear Emily, Sir James is gone to Chamouni, and I can stay:"—and the next moment Matilda stood in amazement before him.

That moment was one made up of the purest inspiration of feeling, and was as little amenable to the dictates of preconcerted prudence, as the effusions of gifted genius are to the dogmas of art.

"Augustus!" escaped from her lips, in a

tone which thrilled the heart's core of Ormsby, and created an oblivion of all things present and past, save only the delights of that happy time when it was "familiar to him as a household word," even from *her* lips. With her, too, the exclamation had arisen from a momentary self-oblivion. But instead of perpetuating, it caused it in an instant to pass away. Her feelings since her marriage had been so severely disciplined, and under such constant controul, that with a single effort she recovered the appearance of composure. Not that the impression was transient,—that it bounded lightly off,—that it was no longer retained when no longer shewn; but as a rock, if dashed on the calm still lake before them, would with its first shock only cause outward agitation; and whilst it sunk deeper and deeper within, and was imbedded for ever in the bosom of the waters, stillness would again have settled on

their surface,—even so, Matilda conquered all external emotion, at a meeting which was not however without influence on her after-fate.

With perfect calmness she began questioning Ormsby as to his unexpected arrival. But his feelings were much less tractable,—excited as they had been, not only by the exclamation of Matilda, but by the momentary expression of her lovely face, glowing with matchless sensibility. It had seemed to him like the transient glimpse of another, and a better world. In vain he tried to force himself into common topics—to account for his being there,—to stammer out a common-place compliment on meeting her,—to bestow some hackneyed praise on her drawing, which he still held in his hand. At last he exclaimed, "It's all in vain,—I may form resolutions in solitude, in a crowd I may maintain them; but in a meeting like this I can but be—my-

self! Pardon this language, — this unwarrantable, but involuntary trespass on your tranquillity. Pity and forget me!" then pressing her hand for an instant to his lips, he rushed into the garden.

It had been a scene of such bewildering emotion, such unexpected interest—previously so utterly unforeseen—so rapid in its development—so abrupt in its termination, that Matilda, wandering unconsciously forth, and finding herself again in her carriage, felt, when first roused by the servant inquiring for orders, like one awakened from the confusion of a dream; but as hastily replying "Home, home," she threw herself back in the carriage, every thing that had passed recurred in all the agitating consciousness of reality, and her feelings now burst forth with a vehemence redoubled by previous restraint.

Having reached the hotel unseen by any

one, to remodel her previous arrangements for the day became a difficult, but an indispensable task. She had settled to dine at Lady Ormsby's villa; she had even sent her maid there with her dressing things. That she must constantly be liable to see Lord Ormsby as a common acquaintance, she was well aware; but to meet him at a family party in the absence of Sir James, she would have felt at any time to be awkward, perhaps incorrect; and, after the events of the morning, she felt it to be impossible. She was, however, rather puzzled how to give any reason for her absence but the true one. At length she dispatched a note to Lady Ormsby, excusing herself on the ground, that Sir James had engaged her to pass the day with his sister Mrs. Hobson; and what is more, she magnanimously determined to act up to her own excuse, thus punishing

herself with positive penance, as well as negative self-denial.

The extent of this additional self-infliction can only be estimated by those who have felt the wearing irritation of vulgar gossip, upon spirits already harrassed and oppressed.

CHAPTER XIV.

The next morning, Matilda was surprised by an unusually early visit from Colonel Canteen.—It was soon evident to her, whilst he turned over the first common-place topics of a morning visit, that he was labouring with some suppressed gossip, to which he attached no small degree of importance. At length he began,—"I believe you were present the other day, when Lady Ormsby attacked me so violently for my allusion to her son's Italian attachment. Well, do you know, it is all perfectly true; even she must now allow that it is satisfactorily confirmed. He has been here, and he is gone again!"—"Gone!" said Matilda, by whom the last word alone was heard. "Yes, he's gone; but I thought you

would first be surprised to hear that he was come, for that, you know, was quite unexpected. Very unlucky that you missed him yesterday; though, to say the truth, he was not quite himself. But how could you sacrifice yourself to those Hobsons?"

Matilda's answer to this inquiry was interrupted by the entrance of Lady Ormsby and Emily. She immediately perceived, by the expression of both their countenances, that they were out of spirits. There would have been, probably, some little difficulty in introducing the topic which was uppermost in all their minds, had not the Colonel, who, the reader will perceive, was completely upon a wrong scent, been so proud of his supposed triumph as to begin almost immediately:—"Well, you see, Lady Ormsby, I was right: the bird has flown back to his former cage:—we have lost him again. I told you that as long as the

Simplon was open, we had no chance of detaining him.

Lady Ormsby had known Colonel Canteen too long, and was too well acquainted with his peculiarities, ever to be seriously offended at any freedom which arose from his desire to appear *au fait* of all the tittle-tattle of society; she therefore answered him quite in a spirit of candour,—"Indeed, I was very much surprised at Ormsby's sudden departure; he would give no satisfactory reason for it; indeed, it seemed a subject on which he did not like much to be questioned. Marshall, his own man, told the servants that he had intended to stay much longer."—"Why," said the Colonel, "I don't suppose he's such a Don Juan as to make a confidant of his Leporello;—mine, you may depend upon it, is the true way of solving the difficulty,—There was 'metal more attractive' elsewhere. Besides,

if his original intention had been to stay longer, what prevented him ?—He saw nobody during his stay but myself and Santelmo, who dined with you yesterday. Which of us, I wonder, frightened him away ?"

Matilda pretended to be more than ever intent upon her work, but from under her eye she stole a glance at Lady Ormsby, and was relieved at seeing no mark of suspicion on her face. On the contrary, the good old lady almost immediately said, " He was not looking by any means well. If you had seen him, Matilda, you would have thought him dreadfully altered."

It was evident from this, that Ormsby had not mentioned the meeting of the morning to his family; and that they should not otherwise have heard of it was not surprising, considering that Matilda had stopped at the garden entrance, and that the servants were

all occupied in searching for their mistress to inform her of the arrival. But, upon hearing from Lady Ormsby this evident ignorance of what had happened, Matilda felt in a dilemma how to act. On the one hand, the usual ingenuousness of her disposition was averse from any thing like concealment;—on the other, it was apparent that Ormsby had been desirous that his mother and sister should remain in ignorance of her influence upon his actions; and ought she not to have some regard for his feelings, in refraining from the disclosure of a circumstance so flattering to her own vanity?

These two different impulses might have been so equally balanced, as to leave her decision doubtful, had not the presence of Colonel Canteen determined her otherwise wavering opinions in favour of silence on the subject; as she knew that, in his hands, such a confession would at once become a matter of

conjecture and inquiry, to which she did not feel equal.

Emily, who had been searching about at the other end of the room, now turned the conversation, by saying, " Matilda, I wanted your sketch book this morning; meaning to copy that last view, by way of occupying myself, after we lost poor Augustus. But I could not find it any where at the villa, nor can I see it here."

Matilda full well recollected in whose hands she had last seen it; but, concealment of the interview itself, of course, entailed equivocation about this particular incident in it. She therefore only replied, " It was at your house when I saw it last."

Soon after this, the visitors departed together. When Matilda was left alone, she could not help feeling rather dissatisfied with herself, for the concealment of her interview

with Ormsby. True, her motives for it were most innocent, originating entirely in a desire to spare the feelings of one, for whom she would have made any personal sacrifice, but on whom she had hitherto been doomed to inflict nothing but pain.

There is, to a naturally candid and ingenuous mind, something no less repugnant in the suppression of the truth from those who justly claim our confidence, than in its wilful perversion to a casual acquaintance. And to one unused to the trammels of deceit, the intentional concealment of a fact, implying a tacit denial of it, often leads to as much embarrassment and difficulty in its consequences, as the support of a positive invention.

The greatest disadvantage attending this unlucky want of candour in the present instance, was, that it first accustomed Matilda's mind to couple Lord Ormsby's image with the

necessity of concealment;—that it first gave the unaccountable charm of forbidden pleasure to those wayward recollections, which, hitherto, so far from assuming the character of guilty pleasure, had been no less innocent than mournful.

CHAPTER XV.

When Sir James Dornton returned from Chamouni, he was loud in his lamentations at having missed Lord Ormsby, and expressed a determination to take the first opportunity of cultivating his acquaintance. It appeared impossible, that he should be impelled to this solely by a desire to do that, which, for some reason or other, seemed disagreeable to Matilda; and it is but justice to him to say, that it afterwards turned out that the real cause of his eagerness on the subject, was the interest he took in the projected rail-way, through his property, at Delaval Park; by which he expected, that his income would in time be nearly doubled; and as, to facilitate that plan, Lord Ormsby's concurrence, as a near neigh-

bour, was to a certain degree necessary, he thought, with a true vulgar feeling, that he could so far conciliate him by civility and attention, as to diminish the difficulty of obtaining his consent.

In a few days, the little *coterie* at the villa returned to their daily habits of easy intercourse, in which Lord Ormsby's ephemeral appearance had been rather an incident than an interruption. It is hardly necessary to say, that the sketch book was never found; and the cause of our hero's sudden arrival, and as sudden departure, continued an enigma to all but Matilda.

Even Colonel Canteen had his confidence in his own penetration on the subject a little shaken, by hearing from some of his numerous correspondents at Rome, that Lord Ormsby had not made that place his destination.

Matilda now felt daily more and more

interested in the prospects and future fate of young Santelmo; and as progressive intimacy made her more acquainted with his character, she warmly sympathized in his sorrows, and was even inoculated with the enthusiasm with which he seemed devoted to the cause of liberty. She had latterly, however, felt rather uncomfortable at his seeming to seek her society, in preference to that of Emily. This was casually explained in the course of one of their frequent conversations, in a manner at which her friend could not have been hurt, though she might have been distressed. "I was utterly ignorant of the charm of female society," said Santelmo, "before the acquaintance of the inmates of these walls became, in my misfortune, an unexpected blessing;—and a blessing I am still infatuated enough to think it, though it has only raised—hopes I cannot even call them—but wishes, which can

never be realized. Branded as my solitary fate is, with the curse of singleness and isolation, it should have been my duty to have avoided temptation—to have had especial care that sympathy should never shadow another's happier lot with the reflection of my misery."

"You surely do not rightly estimate yourself," said Matilda; "so far from your fate being cast in a misanthropic mould, I think I never knew any one whose taste seemed more peculiarly fitted for the duties of domestic life."

"You have only seen me," Santelmo continued, "under the impulse of feelings, which, for the time, have been irresistible. But still my ruling passion is patriotism; my fate is tied to the fortunes of my unhappy country. How, then, could I think of permanent domestic ties?—how could I aspire to be the founder of a family—to undertake the duties

of a husband and a father—when I could offer only perpetual proscription for a settlement—a dungeon for a dower—and slavery for an inheritance?"

"But why view only the gloomy side of the question?" said Matilda; "the spirit of the age is now working in your favour; the wishes of the good and liberal, of every country, are enlisted on your side; and long days of happiness and independence are yet in store for Italy."

"That some such latent hope is the spring that supports this otherwise burthensome existence, I will not attempt to conceal; yet, none but those who, like me, have their whole soul engrossed by the anticipation, are aware how very distant that day may yet be;—by how many conflicting difficulties it may yet be almost interminably delayed.—But I am growing infinitely too political," said he, suddenly checking himself.

" Oh, no !" said Matilda, " pray go on; ever since my childhood, I have always felt an interest in Italy, and all that relates to it, for which I am unable to account." Thus encouraged, Santelmo proceeded to discuss, more at length than he had hitherto done, his own and his country's prospects; the course of which discussion was occasionally diverted by inquiries and observations on the part of Matilda, which her acute and cultivated mind brought to bear on a topic, in which her feelings were powerfully excited.

I shall however give, for the sake of continuity, Santelmo's uninterrupted reflections, such as they often occurred to him; reminding the reader, that they are the opinions at once of an Italian, and of one who was an enthusiast on the subject on which he was speaking.

" *Italia bella*," said he, " never perhaps so perfectly monopolized the exclusive affections of any other of her sons; for I had

never known a mortal mother's care. Allowed in early childhood to run wild about my grandfather's palace, the soft and gentle nature of Italy supplied the place of my lost parent. It was her sunny smile that first gladdened my heart; it was her balmy breath that kissed from my cheek the tears of infancy. As years passed over my head, self-taught, I filled my memory with legends of her early greatness and renown, and inspirations of her poetical pre-eminence. Blinded by filial love and gratitude, absorbed in her former fame, and enwrapt in her transcendent beauty, I was yet ignorant of her present moral degradation. At that time, under the protection of the mighty genius, who then ruled the destinies of Europe, her fallen state was never marked by outward opprobrium; on the contrary, with the considerate kindness of a partial protector, he disguised, as much as possible,

her disgraceful subjection, flattered her little vanities, spent much in adorning and improving her appearance, and, what was most valued, allowed her a share in his glory. If she had ceased to be respectable, she was still, apparently, respected.

"What a change in her situation, when, from the cherished and pampered favourite of a mighty man, she sank at once into the purchased slave of mean and sordid natures; kept as the mere servile instrument of their pleasure; pillaged, insulted, despised, and brutalised! Then it was that I felt all the infamy of her degraded state—the prostitution of her beauties by boorish strangers. Then it was, too, that better hopes had been excited, that even the much respected England had held out deceitful expectations, that her disgrace might be obliterated, and that she might be again restored to the society of

nations. Thus the bitterness of disappointment was added, as a consummation to her misery.

"Maddened at the indignities offered to my native land, whose injuries I resented as those of a parent, I willingly joined those who were united on the glorious principles of individual liberty and national independence. Unfortunately, indiscretions, provoked by acts of galling tyranny on the part of the Government, precipitated abortive attempts, which have themselves tended to postpone our ultimate success. But it is some consolation to think, that no prudence or discretion would have guaranteed personal security, under a Government with whom the mere suspicion of entertaining in silence and in secret certain opinions, is a positive crime; and by whom the mere possession of popular qualities, un-

directed to any political object, is considered to compromise the safety of the State.

" The failure of these premature insurrections has been, with some friends, I fear, as well as foes, conclusive as to our incapacity for freedom. This opinion, I think, has been hastily and harshly taken up, without reference either to the peculiar difficulties under which we labour, or the unparalleled power to which we are opposed. What instance can be produced of a nation succeeding in obtaining liberty in her first struggle for it? and is it nothing, that we have to contend against the accumulated mis-government of centuries, which has produced and confirmed that very ignorance, in the body of the people, which itself incapacitates them for appreciating the advantages of a better state of things—thus seeming at first to perpetuate that reciprocal

cause and effect, which must for ever bar social improvement? But even in more favoured countries, regeneration has not been the work of a moment. Even England, who afterwards achieved the unique renown of the success of a bloodless revolution, had first to wade through the wild and turbulent violence of Cromwell's time, and at the Restoration again relapsed into servility and degradation, until at length her hour arrived. Fickle France, always in extremes, and charmed with novelty, sought at first with avidity (regardless of the means by which it was attained) the Utopian perfection of civil liberty, of which the shadow now is only held at the beck of the Bourbons. Is it nothing for us, stigmatised as we have been, individually, as Italians, with a proneness to assassination, and denounced as a sect bound together by a vow of sanguinary extermination, that, in all

our attempts, not an outrage has been committed, not a drop of blood has been shed? No Louis to the guillotine—no Charles to the scaffold. Where then are our proceedings censured? Is it in that land of political fanaticism, where Sandt's dagger was dignified with the plea of patriotism? Or is this respect for the persons of sovereigns found fault with by the half-savage Serf of the Autocrat, who, when tyranny passes endurance, prefers the murdering the man to attempting the controul of his measures? Perhaps the excessive mildness, the moral virtue of those concerned in the projected revolutions, was one cause of the failure. But this is an amiable error, which one can never regret. The people, however, have received sufficient warning not again to put their confidence in princes. If these arch deceivers should hereafter suffer from a recol-

lection of their perfidy, their blood must rest upon their own heads. But Heaven avert such a calamity! and may the next attempt, whenever it takes place, if rewarded with success, be equally deserving of it with the last! I have very much under-rated our difficulties, when I have compared them with those previously existing in any former struggle between the excited energies of the people on one hand, and the established authorities of the state on the other; for against us, for the first time, has been arrayed an unheard-of confederation of sovereigns—a joint-stock company for the propagation of despotism,—who reverse the benefits of modern mechanical improvements,—perverting principles which have given preternatural powers to our physical exertions, to their own purpose of paralysing mental energies. The members

of this imperial partnership concern are united for the suppression of the free agency of men, and for the reduction of human nature into a mere engine of brute force, to be governed by a touch of their pigmy fingers. In furtherance of which plan, they at once crush the least appearance of opening liberty, beneath the overwhelming weight of their military machine of a million-man-power.

" There is much in all this to abate our confidence, but nothing to justify despondency; for in proportion as the physical force opposed to us is greater than any previously known, the intellectual powers enlisted on our side are more than ever developed; and the Spirit of the Age hovers over our heads, scattering, in all corners of that soil cultivated by knowledge, the certain seeds of future freedom. But the present generation, alas! may pass

away before the fruit is ripe. Engaged as I am, in a cause like this, of which the future issue is doubtful, the present danger alone certain, am I in a condition to form domestic ties? No—never shall a wife of mine be condemned to tread in the faltering footsteps of La Confalonieri, who, having flown to the Fountain Head for mercy, found there no manly sympathy in a woman's sorrows; for even after her husband's sentence had received that partial remission, in which, if life could hardly be said to be spared, death at least was not inflicted,—she was denied the consolation of knowing it, and with the aggravated agony, excited by the dread of arriving too late, was made by the Holy Man of Vienna to retrace her painful pilgrimage: a penance, doubtless, for her heroical exercise of conjugal devotion!—No—my die is cast,—my fortune has been sacrificed—my home has

been abandoned—my heart and soul are devoted to the cause of freedom! And whilst I struggle, I must have nought to distract me; if I fall, I will leave none to regret me."

CHAPTER XVI.

MATILDA's happiness in the society in which she was living at the villa was before long interrupted, by the increasing restlessness of Sir James, who, without having any particular object in view, became, from feeling himself of no particular consequence where he was, anxious for change of place, without its ever occurring to him that he might possibly go farther and fare worse. This impatience had increased, too, since the recent departure of the Hobsons, as he missed his daily dose of flattery and attention, which was always administered to him by all that family. Tom Hobson had all along voted Geneva a stupid spooney sort of a place; his sisters sympa-

thized in his feelings; the mother longed for something new to talk about; and though old Hobson had such a general dislike to locomotion, that he would always rather remain where he was, wherever that might be; yet, as we observed on a former occasion, his opinion upon family arrangements always rather showed itself in word than in deed.

Matilda's objections to moving were twofold, as she disliked leaving Lady Ormsby as much as following Mrs. Hobson. But it was evident, from Sir James's manner of announcing his plan, that opposition would be in vain. She therefore took an affectionate leave of both mother and daughter, and a most friendly farewell of Santelmo, in whom, after his account of himself, she had felt a redoubled interest, though of a more melancholy description, as she was compelled to separate it from

that she felt for her friend, with whom it had previously been her delight to think he was likely to be united.

Our travellers quitted Geneva for Milan, by the Valais and the Simplon. Having always felt delighted myself at getting out of La Valais, I shall certainly not think myself justified in detaining my readers in it, or offending their ears with its guttural German patois, or their eyes with its goîtres; and, as I am not composing imaginary travels, but recording a true tale,—not describing the character of countries, but of persons, I do not think it necessary to retail over again the thousand times told wonders of the Simplon—that extraordinary effort of industry and art.

The Simplon is only one of the many bonds with which Napoleon has bound the rebellious and aspiring Alps down to the permanent con-

troul of their mother earth. It was perhaps the partial success with which he here contended against the elements, in this which had formerly been one of their strongest outworks, that afterwards made him fool-hardy enough to dare their utmost power in the very centre of their frozen regions,—a temerity which ultimately cost him his empire and his life. Here, however, in spite of his subsequent defeats, his power is still acknowledged; and long after the generation which alternately flattered and reviled him shall have passed away, his memory will live in gigantic monuments carved in the solid Alps.

Immediately on the descent to Duomo d'Ossola, Italy does not at once meet you with all her winning smiles, but seems at the first introduction to maintain some reserve of her charms; nor is it till you arrive at the little

Borgo of Baveno, on the borders of the Lago Maggiore, that she breaks forth in all her unrivalled brilliancy of beauty.

It was late when the Dorntons arrived at Baveno; and when, leaving Sir James in the inner room smoking his segar, and grumbling at the heat, Matilda stepped out upon the balcony, the prospect before her was softened, not obscured, by the shadows of a summer's evening; and its loveliness was enhanced, rather than hidden, by a transparent veil of silvery moonlight. If that brilliancy, which an hour before would have dazzled the eye-sight, was somewhat subdued, it was only to give their due share to the enjoyment of the other senses; whilst the softest of breezes, rippling the surface of the waters, just enough to give varied animation to the beams of the rising moon, came fraught with all the fragrance of that sweetest of gardens, *Isola Bella;* at the

same time regaling the ear with the distant sounds of one of the native melodies of this land of music.

As Matilda's eye wandered in admiration of all above and below, the *lucciole* of the earth seemed to emulate the stars of the sky in the universality of bespangled illumination.

"'Tis wonderful," thought Matilda, "that all this should not strike me as new,—that I should entertain an indistinct idea of having sometime seen it before. Often in trifles our wayward memory mocks us with a faint shadow of previous recollections; but that I, whose earliest remembrances are confined within the narrow and remote bounds of Delaval Park, upon first arriving in Italy, and expecting only the unaccustomed charm of a new and brilliant acquaintance, should experience the more endearing feelings of restoration to an early friend—is most strange."

She was still endeavouring in vain to account for this inexplicable circumstance, when she was suddenly summoned to supper by her husband,—who, instead of admiring any thing, was only complaining of being equally hot and hungry.

The next day, betimes, they found themselves in all the bustle of the gay and crowded streets of Milan. When Sir James had sought out the Hobsons, he found them engaged with a new acquaintance, whom all the young ladies considered a great catch. This was one Walter Woodhead, Esquire; who, upon coming of age in a few months, would succeed to a fine estate in the County Palatine of Chester; and a most unsophisticated specimen he was, from that modern Bœotia:—a fine fat-headed home-brewed young fellow, who, if he could stand the vulgar test of knowing chalk from cheese, it was almost the only thing

he did know; being, *au reste*, as heavy, as strong, and as rich as one of his own Cheshires. To him the Hobsons had been introduced by his travelling tutor, the Rev. Mr. Simperton, whom they had formerly met acting as a sort of spiritual master of the ceremonies at the balls at Buxton and at Blackpool, in the course of their different summer excursions from Manchester. Mr. Simperton was now travelling with his young charge, almost a solitary instance of the old bear-leader system; guardians and parents have at length discovered, that to couple a young fellow with a man twice as old as himself, but who knows not half as much of the ways of the world, is not the best mode to initiate him into life.

But if Mr. Simperton filled the situation, he did not at all, either in stiffness or austerity, recal the character of that almost obsolete class. He by no means meant to be a mill-

stone round his pupil's neck, but rather a sort of bell-collar, which might chime in with its own gingling vivacity, at the frisks of him to whom it was attached: and the heavy mass to which he was at present tied, seemed rather to require some such exhilarating accompaniment. Mr. Simperton was certainly turned of forty, but a studious attention to appearance tended at first sight to conceal that fact.

When, upon the entrance of the Dorntons, he made the sign to his pupil to conclude their morning visit, he might have been taken for the younger man of the two, but that the well-made light pepper-and-salt coat, which he had substituted for clerical black, served, as his brother parson Tynte would have said, to recal the colour of a certain grey mixture on his head. His partially grizzled locks were now, however, admirably arranged in carefully

careless curls, so that the set of coat and his crop seemed of equal importance.

"Only think," said Mrs. Hobson to Lady Matilda, as their other visitors left the room, "how pleased the girls were to see our old friend Simperton again! I could not believe my eyes, when we first found him, rowing about on Lake *Margery*, there, in a little linen jacket, and a straw hat big enough to make a bonnet."

It was evident that the acquaintance of these two beaux was a great event to the Hobson girls. Poor Miss Hobson, however, was for the present incapacitated from partaking of her share of the advantage; for she was really seriously indisposed, though not with a malady of a very interesting description. The fact was, that being, as her fiery locks betokened, rather of a warm temperament, and suffering

more severely than the others did from the heat of the weather, she had overdone her desire to

> " Bid the winter come,
> To thrust his icy fingers in her maw."

In short, sweet Betty Hobson was now suffering from what Mrs. Hobson called " *sour bettis.*" She had, in the course of frequent visits to the Ristoratore, used no discretion in the quantities in which she had inserted, " *Grammelate, gelate, Sorbetti, Limonati;*" and, strange to say, cold on her stomach had produced heat on her face, presenting a singular mixture, like a volcano in winter; only that here the ice was internal, and the outward head was, as usual, crowned with its natural warm and glowing colouring.

In consequence of this calamity, Sir James having determined upon inviting one of his nieces, Miss Anne was the favoured person

who was to accompany Matilda in her first visit to *La Scala.*

At Milan, *La Scala* and existence are synonymous. It does not speak highly for the healthful energies of a people, when an opera is their exclusive business, not their occasional amusement;—when they always postpone realities for representations, and even in a theatre prefer sound to substance, and desert Alfieri for Rossini. But though one may regret, one cannot wonder at this, when even as a stranger one feels that there is something in the air of Italy which gives a peculiar charm to music. The same singers, and even the same sounds, have not the same effect when heard elsewhere—

"That strain again! it had a dying fall.
Oh, it came o'er my ear like the sweet south,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour."

This speaks the same feeling in regard to the

mystic influence produced by the soft and soothing union of harmony and of climate.

Absorbed as Matilda was in her attention to one of the most perfect performances that this unrivalled establishment had ever given, the opera was concluded, before, in looking round the magnificent area, she perceived that she herself was an object of general attention to the crowded circle. Her own eye, unaccustomed to the comparative obscurity of a foreign theatre, could but imperfectly distinguish any one. But to those whom nightly habit had familiarized the doubtful gloom, quite enough was discernible to circulate a general inquiry concerning the distinguished and beautiful stranger.

Any sensations of involuntary satisfaction at this universal admiration in Matilda, were suddenly checked by the sight of one object in an opposite box, the internal light in which

rendered its inmates plainly visble. It was the figure of a man, whose attention a lady was endeavouring, with much animation, to engross, but whose eyes (and they were the eyes of Ormsby) were intently fixed upon herself.

It was well that she had this little preparation for what afterwards occured; for, towards the end of the ballet, the door of her box opened, and Sir James, followed by Lord Ormsby, entered.

An opera box is, perhaps, of all places in the world, the best fitted for the necessary operation of undergoing an awkward or embarrassing interview. The doubtful light—the divided attention—the confused noise—are all highly favourable to the assumption of artificial, or the concealment of real feelings. But though possessing, in perfection, this advantage of situation, and somewhat assured, by observing that Ormsby himself was per-

fectly composed, and very different from when she saw him last, yet it required all her exertions to appear outwardly unmoved, when Sir James began,—"I have been telling Lord Ormsby, Matilda, that you regretted, as much as I did, the not having seen him at all, as he passed through Geneva."

It had been entirely out of consideration for Ormsby, that she had originally omitted all mention of that meeting; yet, for the world, she would not he should have known that such had been her conduct. To a man of Sir James's character, she could not have been expected to volunteer unnecessary confidence, yet she could not help feeling guilty when thus convicted of intentional concealment. Oppressed as she was with this sensation, she was relieved at having something else to say, when Sir James, in an audible whisper, prompted her—"Won't you ask him to din-

ner ?" She almost unconsciously repeated the invitation.

The ballet being now concluded, Sir James, taking his niece himself, left Lord Ormsby to hand Matilda to her carriage. In descending, he said,—"Do not entirely deprive me of your society, and I will promise to deserve it better than when last we met; but, for God's sake, let me owe nothing to the constraint of your late echoed invitation."

"Oh! pray come though," said Matilda, in a hurried voice; "I have much to tell you of your mother and Emily:" and thus it was their renewed intimacy began.

CHAPTER XVII.

"More know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows," is a saying which, in its usual modern application, is much more flattering to the notorious individual than it probably was in its original sense. For instance, what person at all *répandu* in the world, has ever dropped for the first time into society of an inferior cast, that he has not at once found his new friends perfectly acquainted with all the most minute particulars of his conduct and connexions—that he has not been immediately gratified with the most recent intelligence of the welfare of some distant relations, of whose existence he would previously have himself been doubtful—that he has not had recalled to his recollection some common-place unim-

portant incident of his own early life, which he had till then forgotten? Those who are thus opening with him a fresh account of acquaintanceship, seem anxious to support the credit side of it, by scraping together every sort of doubtful claims. Having gossiped with a second cousin,—domiciliated at Bath or at Cheltenham, is considered an undeniable passport to intimacy; and as they admit of no statute of limitations, the having seen their new victim as a child, or at school, is put forward as an outstanding bond for the future.

Few ever experienced more varied attacks of this kind than did Lord Ormsby, when, upon first arriving at Sir James Dornton's apartments, he found, besides Lady Matilda, the party then assembled, consisting of Mrs. Hobson, Miss Anne Hobson, Mr. Tom Hobson, and Messieurs Woodhead and Simperton. Miss Hobson was still not presentable; and

old Hobson was completing her discomfort by sulking at home, under pretence of keeping her company.

Sir James was still fussing himself in the dining-room about the arrangement of the dinner, as he was as yet too little of a finished cosmopolite to understand, that a five-franc-a head scramble, at an Italian hotel, can never be drilled into quite the same *martinet* discipline as a well-organized three-week-bespoken banquet in London. Nor, indeed, is it at all necessary that it should, when people give the dinner for the sake of the party, not make the party for the sake of the dinner.

When Lord Ormsby entered the room, Walter Woodhead and Tom Hobson were looking out of the window, criticising the driving of the Milan coachman, whom they laughed at unmercifully, for taking the wrong side of the street. Mrs. Hobson and Lady

Matilda were conversing on one of the sofas; if that could be called conversation, which consisted exclusively of active infliction on one side, and patient endurance on the other. Mr. Simperton, on another sofa, was saying soft things to Miss Anne, not on his own account, but as proxy for his pupil,—between whom and the young lady he was anxious, for reasons which will afterwards appear, that there should exist a mutual good understanding; in the advancement of which plan, he displayed a perfection of tact, which might have had its effect upon a more refined taste than that of Miss Anne; as, in puffing his pupil, he was eloquent in the praise of the beauty, not of his person, but his place; and the cultivation, not of his mind, but his estate.

Two congenial spirits, like Ormsby and Matilda, brought suddenly into contact with such an unsuitable set as this, would, in ordi-

nary circumstances, have found their best resource, and surest defence, in exclusive attention to each other. But from this they were, of course, debarred, by the peculiar awkwardness of their relative situation: so that Lord Ormsby soon fell an easy prey to Mr. Simperton; who, rising from his seat, accosted him with a sweet smile, and, "the temperature's intensely tropical to-day, my *Lud*."

Perceiving, by the tone and manner of Lord Ormsby's assent to this affectedly-turned truism, that he was not aware whom he was addressing, he continued with the same smile, "My name, my *Lud*, is Simperton of Sydney —had the pleasure of meeting your lordship when resident in Cambridge, *in statu pupillari*, at the rooms of my much-valued friend, Doctor Droning,—who, if he had not unfortunately soon been removed to a better place, would before now have been happily promoted to the

Bench. Poor Doctor Droning! Your lʊdship and I had both an irreparable loss in the Doctor."

Lord Ormsby, smiling a little at Mr. Simperton's seeming to think, that though the Doctor was in a better place, still he would have been best as a bishop, proceeded to assure him, that to himself, personally, the Doctor's loss had not been so perfectly irreparable as it otherwise might have been, from the simple circumstance of his never having been in his company but that once, when he was vice-chancellor.

Hardly had our hero recovered from this attack, when he was assailed by Mrs. Hobson, with, "May I make so bold as to ask, my Lord, whether you still let the *jetty deux* play at Ormsby Castle, as we see when we went touring there? I thought 'em vastly fine; but my good man can't bear to hear them

named, because the gardener wetted him to the skin. Tom said, because he only gave him a shilling—but I'm sure you wouldn't approve of such doings." Without waiting for Lord Ormsby's ready disclaimer of any share in old Hobson's ducking, she continued, "Perhaps you may recollect coming into the library for a book when we was all looking at the pictures. I'm sure our Betty said you were the best worth seeing—but I won't make you vain. Yes, and we see you again as we was driving away—you was riding with a strange lady; and Tom, who was sitting on the bar, had told the boy to spin along, and the chaise did jingle, to be sure, and we came clattering behind you, and the road was narrow, and the lady's horse reared frightful to see, and a proper rage you was in with the post-boy; and the boy told us afterwards it wasn't

the Honourable Miss Arlingford neither. I wonder who it was! Do you recollect who it was?"

To this she received no direct answer; for she had at last touched upon an incident which had not escaped the memory of her new acquaintance; and full well did both he and Matilda remember who that lady was.

Tom Hobson now coming up, began his attempt to ingratiate himself, in a manner as strikingly characteristic as either of the preceding.

"Uncommon nice bit of horse-flesh, I may say, my Lord, that tit of yours as won the cup at Manchester last spring. I talked it all over before with your man, Bill Jenkins, and he told me he thought as how he could do the trick. Prime fellow, Bill,—I like him vastly."

"Really, Sir," said Lord Ormsby, half-

laughing, " I don't know whether I ought to be most grateful for your friendly feeling towards my horse or my groom."

" Can these, then, be the connexions of Matilda," thought Lord Ormsby, in the only moment of respite that they allowed him before the entrance of Sir James,—who immediately began a hundred elaborate apologies for the dinner, expressing fears that it would be very bad, and excuses for having asked him when he had not a *maison montée*. In vain did Lord Ormsby assure him that, at least as far as he was concerned, his uneasiness was unnecessary; for that he was probably more used than any other of the party to the scramble of an Italian pic-nic.

Matilda, of course, fell to Lord Ormsby's share as a neighbour at dinner. Since the last time when at Lord Eatington's such had been their relative situation, their feelings of

mutual interest had certainly not abated; but the embarrassment which they then experienced was in the present instance much diminished. And as the paucity of common topics among the party assembled, caused the conversation to be only occasionally dribbled out in no easy flow, they found themselves almost imperceptibly conversing, with much of the ease, if not the confidence, of former times.

Towards the end of dinner, this was interrupted by Sir James, who, when a little warmed with an incessant fire of bottomless *bicchieri* of champagne, began to show that most infallible mark of a vulgar mind — the knowing no medium between form and familiarity. We have seen him needlessly punctilious in his formal apologies for the dinner; and he was now as unceremoniously familiar—in bantering his new guest in a manner which a man of the world would have

have known that nothing but intimacy could sanction.

At first, indeed, he only commenced with, "When we met you in town, Lord Ormsby, I had no idea that you meant so soon to return upon your travels.—Pray, how did that happen?"

"I'm afraid I can only plead a truant disposition, good my Lord," said Lord Ormsby; "and that we Anglo-Italians, like dram-drinkers, can never resist just one drop more. It is a taste that grows more inveterate from every indulgence."

"Oh," said Sir James, "I dare say that's all just so, but we can give a better guess than that. We know pretty well what brings you so often across the Alps;—we've heard that there's a lady in the case."

Lord Ormsby almost started, from the consciousness that, in this last instance, Sir James

had stumbled upon something like the truth, though in a very different sense from what he intended. He only, however, replied, "that he was quite at a loss to know to what he could allude."

"Oh, you remember, Matilda, don't you," said the Baronet, "all they used to say about Lord Ormsby and the Lady at Rome?"

Matilda pretended she did not recollect. "Well, that's very odd," said Sir James, "for I'm sure when I first went down to Delaval Park, in your uncle's time, one used to hear of nothing else.—It was in every body's mouth. For my part, I could not make out why they all occupied themselves so much about it."

A new light flashed upon Lord Ormsby's mind on hearing this, the effect of which was strengthened by his knowledge of the character of the late Lord Wakefield, and the evident

embarrassment that he remarked in Matilda at Sir James's allusion to that time. He now was convinced, that the whole report was concerted for the sake of alienating from him Matilda's affections; and though he was justly impatient at the Baronet's vulgar impertinence, yet he could not but be grateful to him for having thus involuntarily given him the explanation of his former mistress's apparently unaccountable fickleness.

And fatal indeed this intelligence proved. It enabled his imagination to represent Matilda, not as an easy changeling, but as the victim of consummate artifice. It restored her character to all its original faultless charm, and thus removed the only feeble barrier which his reason had ever been able to oppose to the daily increasing power of that resistless passion, against which he was still in vain endeavouring to contend.

Sir James would have thought that he had foresworn his birthright as an Englishman, if he had, under any circumstances, foregone that most civilised and gallant of our customs, by which we daily prove to the fair sex, when they put us to the trial, that we prefer the worst of wine to the best of company. But a little Italian Marchese, whom Sir James had, somehow or other, picked up, and to whom no one had addressed a word, and who had not understood a syllable of what was addressed to any one else, followed the ladies as a matter of course; and Lord Ormsby, profiting by his mistake, soon afterwards left the room, as he did not feel particularly anxious either to discuss politics with Sir James and Mr. Simperton, or sporting with Tom and his friend Woodhead.

The Baronet and the Parson, therefore, those temporal and spiritual pillars of the

state, remained reciprocating church and king principles in the most orthodox duet; though it is but justice to them to say, that they joined to the most unbounded admiration of their own government, the most undisguised dislike of that under which they were then living, and to the establishment of which their friends at home had mainly contributed. But so it is, that however bigoted a thorough-paced Tory may be at home, I never knew but one Englishman who was not a Liberal abroad.

Tom in the mean time was puffing off the courier, Pierre, to his friend Woodhead.—"By Jove," he said, "a fellow who, when I saw him in England, I should have said was a spooney; who looked as if, had you taken and turned him twice round, he would not have known where he was; and now he shall ride

against time with any man in Europe, I don't care who."

There were very few subjects in the world that would have provoked the phlegmatic Woodhead into a contradiction, much less an argument; but this was exactly the one most likely to produce that effect. The spirit of Nimrod was roused in him, when he heard a foreign *chap* set up as a crack horseman. He therefore quietly objected, that he could not be compared to young Coverdale, who won the Great Steeple Chase last year!

"Steeple Chase!" said Tom; "I'll bet Pierre sees more steeples in one day than Coverdale has in his life. But I'll tell you what he shall do, that will beat all your Barclay matches hollow. I'll back him for five hundred, to ride a hundred miles *a day, all the year around.*"

" Done !" said young Woodhead, with (for him) most unusual energy of manner.

At this awful monosyllable, Tom was, as he would himself have expressed it, rather taken aback. The offer had been mere bully on his part ; he was not at all sure of his man, and had little expected, from any thing he had previously seen of Woodhead, that he would have turned so sharply upon him. But, in one respect, he had underrated the young squire, whose intellects, in the more negative department, were not so contemptible. Though they did not enable him to execute much himself, they gave him a pretty good idea of what was impossible for any one else to execute. Therefore, when Tom pretended to laugh it off, as a joke, Woodhead claimed it seriously as a bet.

The dispute growing loud, disturbed the politicians, who interfered to quash it at once ;

and for fear it should be renewed, they proposed adjourning to the ladies. There they found Lord Ormsby, who, after he had patiently submitted to every variety of frivolous question and observation from Mrs. and the Miss Hobsons,—all interlarded with, —"Sir—my Lord, I mean," was at length allowed quietly to establish himself by the side of Matilda, at the piano-forte.

The words of a song are, generally speaking, proverbially a matter of indifference; so completely are they a mere vehicle for music, that, like the carriage which brings our friends to dinner, they seldom excite our observation. Many a Miss apostrophises her music-master by the hour, as, "*Ben mio!*"—"*Unico speme della mia vita!*"—utterly unconscious that she is expressing herself at all tenderly. And in the majority of singers, one can no more decide, from the expression, that the

topic may be more interesting than the Catch of—"Jolly, jolly six-pence,"—than from the pronunciation, that it may not be Hebrew.

But the language of love, in its lyric garb, though it falls perfectly powerless on the ear that boasts no kindred affinity, has, when it harmonises with existing feelings, a resistless attraction. So thought Lord Ormsby, as he hung enraptured on every note of Matilda's, who sang with an expression peculiar to himself, and equal to her musical execution. And as he joined her in an impassioned duet, he felt it a relief to be allowed, even in song, to give utterance to those heartfelt sentiments, which, in prose or in his own person, he dared not whisper.

In a word, this was a day, marked by the final abandonment, on his part, of any attempts to resist the indulgence of a passion, which, if hopeless, could only tend to his own

misery; if successful, must insure the utter ruin of its object—whose welfare he would have vowed was far dearer to him than his own.

END OF VOL. I.

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